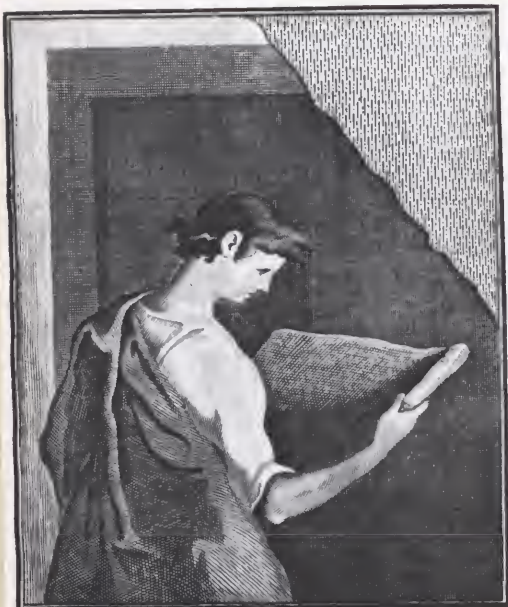


# CORREGGIO



T. STURGE MOORE



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CORREGGIO







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*Frontispiece*



# CORREGGIO

BY

T. STURGE MOORE



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1906

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## PREFACE

THIS is not a work of original research. In 1896 Signor Conrado Ricci published a critical digest, most elegant in form, of all the information bearing on the subject. For his work I must express the deepest gratitude, as it supplied me with many elements which otherwise I should have lacked. However, my aim differed from his, and the result is obviously divergent.

I have to thank my friend Mr. C. S. Ricketts for many valuable suggestions, especially in preparing the Chronological Lists of pictures and drawings. I would also thank once more the many kind people who, in one way or another at different points, have lightened my task. Lastly, in conjunction with Messrs. Duckworth, I wish to thank private owners for generous permission to have several of the illustrations made.

T. STURGE MOORE.



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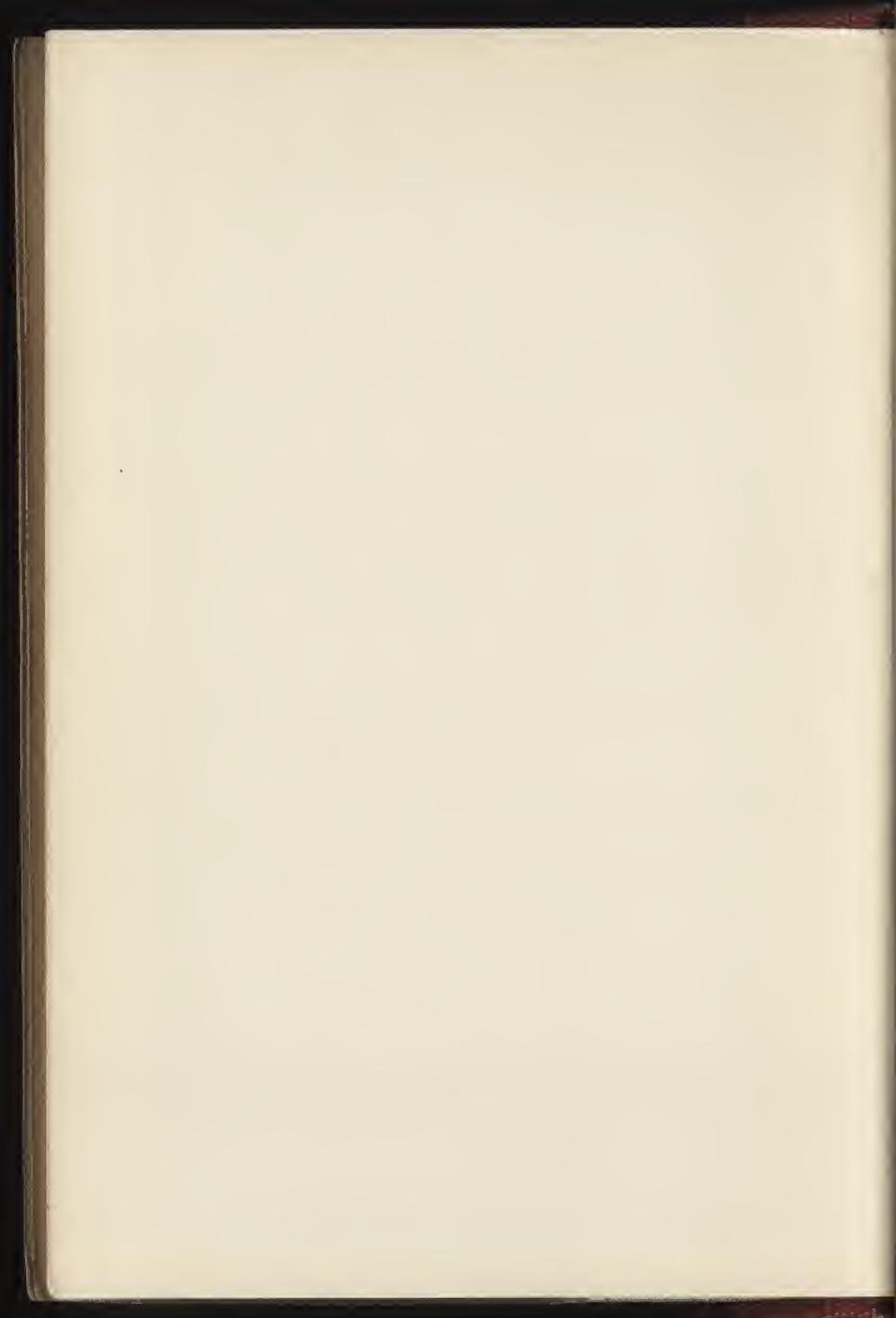
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## CHAPTER I

### PRETENSIONS

#### I

THE study of Art by the same methods as those which have yielded science so astounding a harvest, is well to the fore to-day. A great success like that achieved in the past century by physical science inspires and captivates; for man moves with man. What has done so much for so many, is expected to do everything. "All knowledge is interesting;" and that a livelier interest should be taken in deciding dates, schools, and names than is taken in the work of art itself is not at all surprising. Beauty is only interesting to those who have an eye for it; and whereas we have abundant means for training our intellects and the practice obtains to a considerable extent, there are hardly any established means for cultivating the sense of beauty. Knowledge is power, but not the only power; besides, we often see men incapable of using their knowledge—then it does not of necessity impart power to the man who knows. The ultimate outcome of the effort to know might even be the suicide of all who knew enough to have a comprehensive despair forced upon them. While we are ignorant we hope this will never be; yet we see men so oppressed by knowledge that they free Gray's

“Where ignorance is bliss,” from every trace of the irony with which it has been associated.

The construction of a scientific classification is imaginative; it is a guess, a divination, that only becomes knowledge when an appeal to experiments always proves the facts to tally exactly with it. The most generally interesting of these guesses are those about which there is least hope of this being the case at any near date. We must face the possibility that, if we knew, we might wish that we had prized our other faculties more, our curiosity less. There is, perhaps, good reason to recognise that our acquisitiveness in regard to knowledge may be out of proportion to the development of our other faculties. Of course the great mass of men have no need to be warned against devoting their energies to the acquisition of knowledge; rather they need spurring to give it its due place. But among the educated the number of those who have specialised in some one branch of learning out of all proportion to the development of their other faculties tends perhaps to become excessive. “Slow fingers of the time of scorn” are already directed towards certain types of scholarship; and the word “specialist” can easily convey blame. “A mere specialist,” we say, implying that the judgment on things in general of the person designated need not be taken seriously, however valuable his opinion on his given subject may be. In an essay on “Good Manners,” Swift says, “Pedantry is properly the overrating any kind of knowledge we pretend to.” The science which disables a man’s judgment or temper or physique is naturally held cheap; for the value of what we have here and now is measured in vitality and in hope; I for one expect it to be so to the end of the tale. In any case, “What is the

value of this to me now?" is the question of questions, as Goethe well saw.

## II

"The other day as I turned over the sumptuous volume of reproductions from drawings in the Chatsworth collection, and glanced over Mr. Strong's introduction, I said to myself, "Here is some one whose scholarship in other branches of inquiry has enabled him to see how unsatisfactory the state of this so-called science is;" and I was pleased to read, "Our own modest demand for the signs of genius, in all cases and in every part, often introduces difficulties. We want the ancients to be always classical, and we picture men of genius as always in the attitude which—even with much less than genius—they would certainly assume now." It was a relief to find some one implying that to be able to picture men of genius properly was a fundamental requisite for these inquiries. That was what most seemed to be lacking.

Often, when reading history, I have felt that historians can rarely construct where they are not set aglow by some unfortunate racial, religious, or political bias; so that it would be much better if they were fired by the love of beauty as it is revealed in the larger aspects of life, and became artists. Wherever they are merely scientific they are reduced to the catalogue, a construction which shares the inexplicable insignificance of brute matters of fact. The analogy between historical art criticism and physical science is false for two reasons. Works of art differ from the productions of animals or plants in that they are modified by conscious effort. "Other creatures submissively follow the law of their nature; man alone has an impulse

leading him to set up some other law to control the bent of his nature.”\* The other reason is dependent on this: for the great complexity in methods of production which results from these conflicting impulses, and the fact that repetition of process and result plays a much more variable part in the human sphere, renders the intelligence not nearly so sufficient to grapple with these problems as with those presented by the productions of bees or ants; sympathy, tact, imagination are required in a far higher degree. For “these are old questions and insoluble by any positive method, since they cannot be answered by the facts, but only by our interpretation of them.”† The first step in history and art criticism must be to recognise how small a proportion of the facts is within our reach, and that this small proportion cannot be considered in any sense as certainly representative; that is, the unknown facts may contain both new classes and new exceptions of which those within our knowledge give us no hint.

Let me proceed now to illustrate these points: Leonardo, and Durer too, warned artists against reproducing their own physical peculiarities in their works; for they had both noticed that the man who had a big nose tended to produce faces with emphatic nasal protuberances, and the man who had thick ankles bestowed them upon his Apollo. It was probably a common result of a master's experience with his prentices. But once conscious effort has been directed to correcting this cause of self-betrayal, what surprising revolutions in the sizes and shapes of ears, noses, ankles and thumbs must we not be prepared to meet with in the work of one and the same artist! And it is evident

\* M. Arnold. “God and the Bible.”

† Santayana. “Interpretations of Poetry and Religion.”

from the example of modern artists that conscious effort directed to the nature of hatching or outlines, colour or paste, may produce even more sweeping revolutions. Of course, the less individual an artist is the more like an animal's will his habits and productions be, and this accounts for the successes of Morelli's method (which, rightly grasped, is that of all scholarship) in dealing with primitive schools. In later art it has only the unconscious mannerisms or faults of an artist to work upon, and is set over against an ever-increasing mass of positive evidence that appeals to the imagination, and can only be estimated by it. However, since plants and animals do not correct and overrule their natural habits by conscious effort, Mr. Berenson's enthusiasm appears either amusing or misleading when he says: "I, for one, have been for many years cherishing the conviction that the world's art can be—nay, should be—studied as independently of all documents as is the world's fauna or the world's flora. The effort to classify the one should proceed along the line of the others, and if done with equal brains and equal strenuousness of purpose the success surely should be equal."\* We have seen why the success most assuredly should not be equal. Strenuousness and brains we may admire in Mr. Berenson and some of his colleagues; but we cannot admit that they suffice to measure the possible results of conscious effort. Psychology is in its infancy, and probably will be a very long while growing up, because the facts upon which it must be based are so infinitely varied, and can hardly ever be dealt with at first hand; while, when they can, the inevitable prepossession of a man with himself introduces an incalculable liability to bias.

\* Berenson. "The Study and Criticism of Italian Art."

No doubt other branches of science suffer to some extent under this disability; for disabling it is to lack, or refuse to exert, the power of imagining the result which our researches are intended to establish. But perhaps none of them, not even history itself, is so neutralised by this reflection as the criticism of works of the imagination.

### III

Now, what I wish to advance is, that every attribution based on internal evidence is, and must be, a work of the creative imagination; and, therefore, we have a right to demand that a critic shall, in the first place, impress us with the conviction that he has an unusually "near and intimate" relation to the artists he treats of: so that if they were now living it would be easy and natural for him to come into touch with them. Any man of whom we cannot feel this, whatever be his learning, his acuteness, his industry, is rightly to be treated with distrust as a critic.

Where science has succeeded in studying "the world's flora and the world's fauna," and what it has made intelligible, are collective distinctions and their relations to one another and common conditions. Individuals among animals are assumed to be units not merely of number, but of character, precisely equivalent the one to the other; peculiarities of individuality are treated as accidental, and of no calculable importance, and, as in the case of pets, their recital soon becomes tedious, so little can be made of them. Works of art, on the other hand, are valuable in proportion as peculiar personal gifts appertaining to a single exceptional individual are dominant. Artists who do not rise above a school or local type are poor artists. It



is true that certain school and local types are in themselves of considerable value ; but that value only attains its full importance when wedded to the peculiar energies of some genius. As revealed in a dull man's work, even the best of them are insipid. The fault of these would-be scientific critics is that they are for ever giving the significance which natural history rightly gives to collective traits, to traits which can neither be clearly described nor asserted to be collectively representative.

The data which are called internal evidence never constitute an attribution as certain apparently constant phenomena constitute what is called the law of gravitation ; an attribution is not even a logical deduction from data, as a working hypothesis in science has to be. No, it must always be an imaginative construction, based on such data only in the sense that a historical drama is based on history ; and this because a vivid conception of the artistic personality behind them is at least as essential to an attribution as such data are. It can never be proved in a scientific sense, though it may carry conviction like other works of art. Indeed, I see no reason why it should not possess that truth superior to the truth of history, of which Aristotle speaks. Mr. Strong states with scathing sarcasm that "Giorgione, quit of the control of history, and hovering, as it were, between fact and fiction, reveals himself to the critics as something higher and better than anything that can be shown." We should not grumble at having in the pages of a critic something higher and better than can be shown elsewhere ; but we are right to scorn the statement that something has existed so high and great that the pen of the critic is as powerless to reveal it as, to judge from what is shown, the pencil of Giorgione may have been.

We are driven to exclaim, "Oh! that Giorgione were a fiction, and Mr. Berenson a good novelist!" But Mr. Strong says "quit of the control of history," and elsewhere, "Historical inquiry, through which, as most educated students have begun to see, the way to progress leads": and am I not pleading for a greater freedom from control? No. History may prove that such and such a picture was supposed to be in such a place, and to be the work of such an artist, at any given date: but that it really *was* that picture, the work of that artist, that was in that place at the given time, history never can prove. Neither can she prove that that picture was the one we now possess and discuss. If we grant her the probability of these connections—as, in the majority of cases, all but the very factious perhaps would—she is an inestimable safeguard, but more than this is beyond her power. Well may it be said that the way to progress leads through historical inquiry, because it has already passed through other processes, and must open out into others again.

## IV

At this point I should like to turn a stream of light upon our subject from minds far finer and grander than my own, from those suns of criticism Goethe and Matthew Arnold. I will begin with our English master; in that inexhaustibly suggestive book, *Literature and Dogma*, I have found a passage which, it seems to me, may be made to supply the needed light by the simple process of changing words like *letters* and *literary* for words like *art* and *aesthetic*. It will then read thus:

We all know what the æsthetic criticism of the mass of

mankind is worth. To be worth anything, æsthetic and scientific criticism require, both of them, the finest heads and the most sure tact, and they require besides that the world's experience shall have come some considerable way. But, ever since this last condition has been fulfilled, the finest heads for art and science, the surest tact for these, have turned themselves in general to other departments of work than criticism of pictures. . . . As our Reformers were to Shakespeare and Bacon in tact for letters and science, or as Luther even was to Goethe in this respect, such almost has on the whole been, since the Renaissance, the general proportion in rate of power for criticism between those who have given themselves to interpreting pictures and those who have given themselves either to creating works of art, or to the solution of scientific problems.

Between Ruskin, shall we say, and Reynolds ; between Morelli and Fromentin ; between Berenson and Darwin. And the passage would terminate with the reflection :

that in æsthetic criticism professors are nevertheless bold, overweening, and even abusive in maintaining their criticism against all questioners ; although if one thinks seriously of it it was a kind of impertinence in such professors to attempt any such criticism at all.

Or again, more moderately, and more succinctly :

The exact history of these pictures is irrecoverable ; and in the absence of it we cannot but have recourse to the test of internal evidence. But we ought also to resign ourselves to be ignorant of much, we ought to be sparing of vigorous and rigorous theories. . . . It is easy to be sweepingly negative in these matters ; easy also to think we can know more about them, and more certainly than we can.\*

\* " God and the Bible."

The judges constituting the tribunal ought not to be the professional critics, but men like Reynolds.

I can find no other adequate parallel to the names given, for great artists have rarely possessed the time, the leisure, or the general culture to express their views adequately. Still, until they have done so, we must be content to regard all other judgments as belonging to the day of small things.

Thanks to Goethe and Arnold it is now beginning to be admitted that little really adequate criticism of poetry and works of creative literature has been produced, save by those who were themselves poets and creators. Aristotle prepared himself for writing on æsthetics by composing a poem ; and it is everywhere implied in his work that he conceived that the critic adequate to his task would be not a Bacon who was Shakespeare too, but a Shakespeare who was also Darwin. This is the ideal, the only possible conception of the adequate critic.

Is it too much to hope that in a hundred years time, when the rubbish and litter of to-day have been swept up by Oblivion, it may be held for true that little really adequate criticism of art has been produced by those who were not themselves successful painters or creators? Not, let me add, that even then, even such judges will be held infallible : but that people will alone look for the delicacy of divination, and those illuminating suggestions which give value to such criticism, in the works of approved creators. Painters and sculptors will have been encouraged to address their leisure to these matters ; the scientific data will have been liberally furnished them by friends of real deductive power and comprehensive research, who were happy to

collaborate in a result which they were far too modest to dream could be adequately furnished by their own attainments ; that such a happy time may be in reserve for our children's children, who can say? Yet who will forbid the hope?

## V

Nevertheless, far be it from me to insist that the efforts of a mind however uncreative must needs be fruitless in this field of æsthetic criticism. Only let such consider that the function of art is to move us finely, and that if a man would but prove himself to have been nobly moved by a picture, no matter to whom he might attribute it, he would draw art-lovers about him, avid to catch though it were but a reflection of his enthusiasm and increased effectiveness. Indeed, I cannot help suggesting that Mr. Berenson may possibly owe the light with which he shines for so many to-day to this delightful cause, rather than to his science or deductive powers. These last led him to compile that elaborate mare's nest of his entitled *Lotto* ; in which after having endowed his imaginary hero with all sorts of quite contradictory virtues, and having discovered in his most commonplace pictures the most appalling psychological powers, he described this artist's portrait of himself as "The interpretation of a commonplace, prosperous person."\* Yet it was this commonplace person whom he

\* See the *Burlington Magazine*, March 1905. The portrait holds a "Giuoco dell Lotto" in one hand while he touches his breast significantly with the other to corroborate Mr. Kerr Lawson's divination. This last-named was able to add the following note ; "Probably Morelli's notion as to the northern workmanship of the picture was suggested to him by the decidedly German type we here find Lotto to be. At a later period (1639-1690), a German painter named J. Karl

had coupled with Titian. "Both Titian and Lotto are dramatic," "they have an equal power of vivid representation;"—while this commonplace soul was supposed to have breathed into his works "the romance" that "is too delicate, the quickness of life too subtle, and the joy in light too dainty, not to betray an artist vividly conscious of it all (*sic*) as he lives and breathes."

And now let us hear Goethe :

Among the manifold strange absurdities of the schools, none appears to me so ridiculous as the practice of disputing about the genuineness of old writings and works. Is it the author or the work that we admire or censure? . . .

Who is there that will maintain that we have Virgil or Homer before us when we are reading words which are attributed to the one or the other? We have the writers of those words, and what more do we require?

Thus Goethe wrote : and what a deal of fret and fever might have been saved to patient and learned men could they but have borne these sentences of his in mind!

On these matters of history and criticism the one thing known certainly is that nothing can be certainly known.

Men are vexed at finding that truth is so simple. They should bear in mind that they have quite enough to do in applying it to their needs in practice.

The important thing in practice is what a work of art means to each man as an experience. Whether it be the result of one mind or many, produced by one hand or many, there it stands; how does it affect us? To express Loth, a native of Munich, practised at Venice, where he was known as 'Lotti.' It would not be greatly surprising if our Lorenzo turned out to be a German."—J. K. L. It would not surprise but might make us feel that expert criticism was very much of a lottery indeed.

our real thought about it, we may feel impelled to say, "This cannot proceed from the same source as that, for this is effective, that bungling and stupid." But to pretend that an explanation of these impressions of ours has scientific validity, however ingeniously it may be brought into accord with the known data, is to assume that we have what we know we cannot have, *i.e.*, sufficient data to deduce a certain conclusion from.

A school [says Goethe again] may be regarded as a single individual who talks to himself for a hundred years and finds an extraordinary pleasure in his own being, however foolish it may be. . . . A false doctrine cannot be refuted, for it rests upon the conviction that the false is true. But the opposite (truth) can, may, and must be maintained unceasingly.

So, although the "attributive school" of critics must yet talk many years before its hundred be up, it is our duty to insist that these are matters of probability not certainty, and of experience not authority. These things can never be established for ever: the things that are established for ever are of quite another nature.

## CHAPTER II

### POSSIBILITIES

#### I

HERE I had half a mind to have ended this Part, only on reading what I had written, I feared it might seem designed to be rather destructive than constructive: besides, pertinent reflections and after-thoughts kept crowding on my mind, till I determined to risk wearying my reader by over-insistence, in hopes of making him feel, as I felt, that here was not a mere endless discussion started, but a door opened on a great prospect of future achievements.

Would not matters go more smoothly, and much heart-burning be saved, if it were recognised that History, whether of actions or of creations, was a great and noble art, inspired by a divine muse, and having for the material in which it works, the results of inquiries from which science can deduce no sufficient conclusion; inquiries which are vitally interesting nevertheless, because they yield us all that can be surely known of man's most universal efforts and most significant creations?

#### II

There has been a tendency a little to slight this art by calling it science, on the ground that accurate knowledge



is required for it. But to what art is not some accurate knowledge necessary? To all, it seems to me, an accurate knowledge of the material in which they work is essential—such an intimate knowledge, so prevailing with the habits of body and mind, that it seems like an instinct, a miracle. Only genius ever possesses such knowledge to the full. What makes the scholar tend to scorn the artist's judgment on works of art, or the artist the scholar's? It is that each possesses accurate knowledge which the other needs; and which, by the malignity of narrow necessity, is beyond the reach of either. They should co-operate. They should learn one of the other. Surely History requires creative imagination on a vastly more liberal scale than physical or mathematical science? Was it not well said that "the professors of the so-called higher criticism generally, after producing reasonings which do really prove that a thing might have been so and so," jump "straight to the conclusion that they prove that so and so it must have been?"\* Will not this apply also to many results of recent scholarly criticism of works of art? I think it will: the false analogy with physical science which has led astray the efforts of so many artists during the last sixty years, has worked similar mischief, it seems to me, for historians and critics. They forget what Aristotle so truly pointed out, that "it is probable that a thing may happen contrary to probability." Neither do they sufficiently remember, when speaking of eminent actions and creations, what he says in another place, "No great genius was ever without some mixture of madness, nor can anything grand or superior to the voice of common mortals be spoken except by the agitated soul." And on great

\* M. Arnold. "Isaiah of Jerusalem."

subjects who would listen to the voice of unmoved men, or, listening, expect to hear the truth? Men are agreed about many things that cannot be proved: conviction is often rightly based on other grounds. To believe some things is such an obvious and immediate benefit, that no sane man refrains. If the critic—scholar or artist, or both combined—renders significant the work with which he deals, and at the same time shows that a high degree of probability attaches to what he says, he will lead us captive and convince us.

The scholar, wherever to speak of science is to dream, has to help him some of the greatest creators who have written excellently about art. We English have Reynolds, who has written more about painting, and knew more historically about painting, than any other equally eminent artist. His knowledge, however, was but small compared with what is within reach to-day; it may be wise therefore for critics to seek, as well, those among our contemporaries who prove themselves to be creators with the brush, and to whom they might resort to supply their insufficiency. This course will, I think, appear hopeful when we consider the immense variety of the demands which reason makes upon one who would pronounce judgment on the noblest works of man.

### III

Many can admirably use historical information in the service of art, when they have attained it; a quick sense to perceive and a retentive memory to accumulate technical peculiarities and other mannerisms, a few may be able to use without abusing; on the gestation of the idea and

the construction of its visible symbol, who shall dare to speak unless he be himself a creator? Yet these last items are of prime importance. They constitute the only skeleton on which criticism can hope to model a life-like statue of the artist; when the critic can put this up, and only then, can all his minute observations find their right place and true significance. Yet even such a statue could never be known to be a faithful likeness, though, as in the case of Othello or Don Quixote, it might create an even greater conviction of its truth than any historical evidence of an actual personage conveys. How tentative should the expression of criticism be then! How slow to assert! How anxious to dwell with the spirit! How afraid of the deadening effect of details separated from a whole which can never be known with certainty!

It should be borne in mind that the unmitigated assertion is an effective means of rhetoric, and has nothing to do with science. Its effect is produced on the imagination, not on the intellect; how much that is put forward as science appears to be very artless rhetoric! The conviction from which such assertions spring is often our benefactor; but our gratitude need not blind us to its real nature, which is not altered, though it later on receive support from other branches of history or from archæology. No doubt such support nurses the human hopefulness of those whose passion it is to see truth nearer than it may be possible for a cooler reason to do, and encourages the effort to surprise her.

I found in Mr. Strong's preface, referred to above, an excellent application of this truth. "His (Morelli's) dogmatism is constant and obvious; but it is rather the impulse of vivid impressions than any preliminary pose

of conceit"; a remark which is as fair as it is true, and indeed suggested much of what I have written. Still, this eager and masterful assurance should not be allowed to deter those who have been benefited by works of art from aiding others to come by the like.

Let me once more alter a sentence of our great critic so as to adapt it to the subject and yet preserve his meaning: "The right way to get a great artist appreciated is to raise, not as much discussion as possible over his work, but as little as possible." No doubt, in order to sharpen the senses and wits of those who devote their lives to this inquiry, discussion is good exercise; but should it not be kept as far as possible out of sight of the general public, as it cannot but tend to confuse them and lessen their sense of security?—to damage which is the last way to arouse greater attentiveness in them. For he who finds a work produce on him the effect he is accustomed to associate with the name of Michael Angelo or some other master will do very foolishly if he allows this, his possession, to be destroyed by the nagging of a meticulous science which at best makes so feeble an approach to certainty; and he who overloads his conception of a great creator by giving a strained attention to works which produce no kindred impression, will find himself drowning like the ass laden with sponges in the fable. It is much to be doubted if an over-great mental activity before a work of art, especially one directed chiefly to the detection of technical peculiarities or of other mannerisms, is likely to increase the sanity of any man's judgment. Still less is it likely to enable him to enter the society of spirits grander than his own.

## IV

By rights authority belongs to a sound reason, not to the man who utters it; and if this is not borne in mind, when some dominant personality falls into decay or is overthrown, we run the risk of losing insight which might have been a permanent possession.

I take it ill that Mr. Berenson, who has ideas, and imagination even, should have taken his stand on this mountain of false positions and look as brave as General Stoessel from the top of it. It is only fair to add that he has recognised the spiritual fruitlessness of his efforts and their meagre importance. "I see now," he tells us, "how fruitless an interest is the history of art and how worthless an undertaking is that of determining who painted, or carved, or built whatsoever it be. I see now how valueless all such matters are in the life of the spirit," and this he tells us in the very same preface from which I have quoted his persistent conviction "that the world's art can be, nay should be, studied as independently of all documents as the world's fauna or the world's flora." However, it is just this return of Mr. Berenson upon himself which makes him so interesting, proves him to be a friend of the spirit. And woe it is that his habit of overstating every thing, which determines his literary style, should not have deserted him even here. For it is not true that the history of art must be a fruitless interest; only if you are resolved to make its results scientifically certain must it be fruitless, not if you allow it to feed and strengthen the imaginative reason; not if you abandon the vain hope of making it what it can never be, self-sufficient.

## V

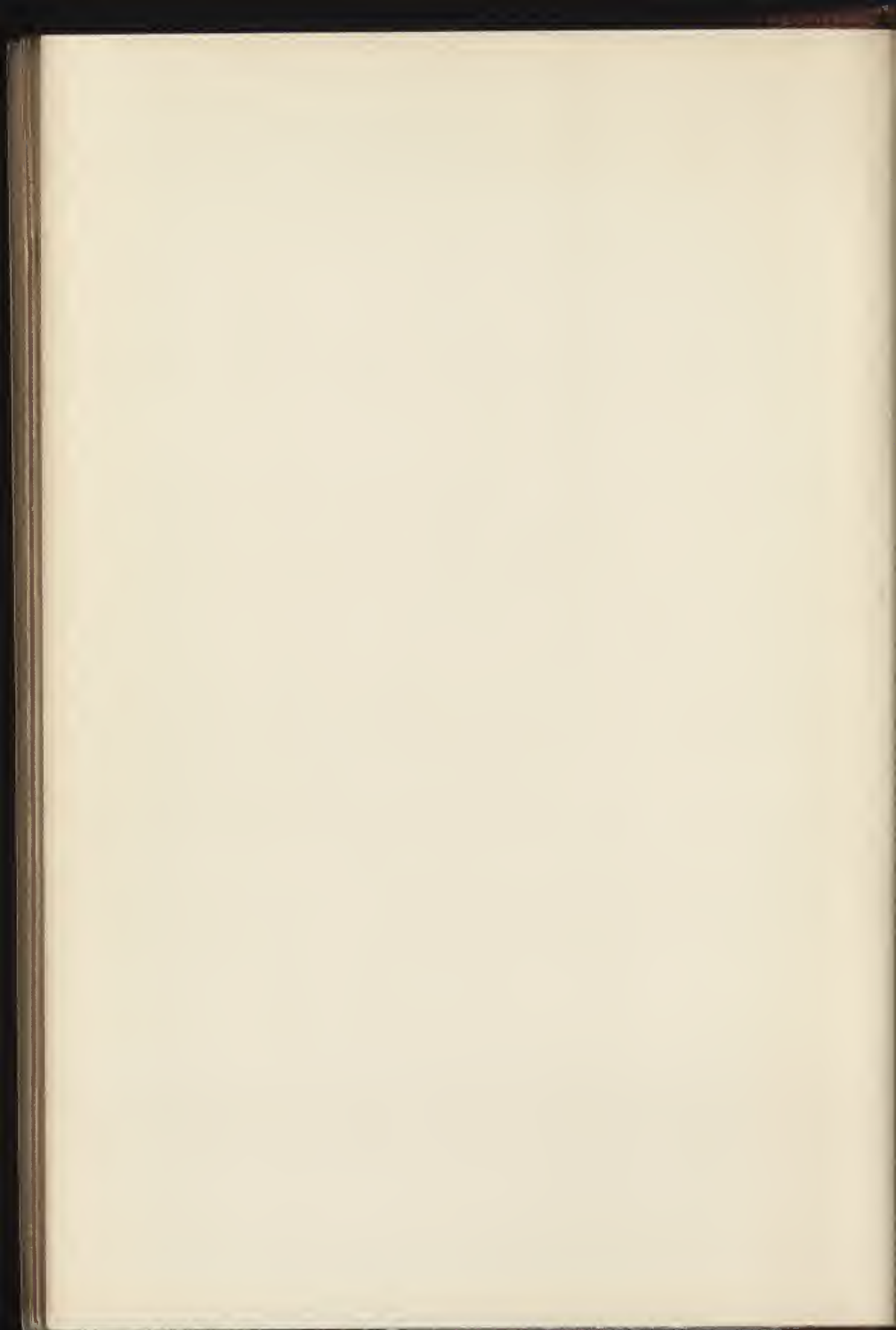
One mind with its knowledge of history, of letters, and of thought, deepens and expands the experience resulting to us from our contact with a work of art. This is Winckelmann's, Goethe's, Ruskin's field of operations.

Another mind by its intimate knowledge derived from daily practice with similar implements and materials, and its fellow feeling for the aims of a creator and workman, produces a like deepened and expanded interest, though by very different means. This is the field of operations wherein Reynolds is supreme and in which Fromentin is pre-eminent.

Such deepening and expansion of the effect of works of art upon us is an end in itself, and shapes us to humane ideals as the practice of virtue does. To maintain receptivity for suggestions which can thus enlarge our experiences is to foster a habit of self-creation : to maintain an attitude of indifference or hostility to them is to entail the disintegration and atrophy of noble capacities. La Rochefoucauld makes the tonic reflection that "*La magnanimité méprise tout pour avoir tout.*" No pride, no ambition, no indolence, can hinder great minds from learning, even when it must be from fools ; for their happiness is to increase in wisdom, and in view of that end they count all else but loss.

## PART II

CREATOR AND VIRTUOSO





## CHAPTER I

### FAME'S PORTRAITS

#### I

"THE fame of a great man is not rigid and stony like his bust," wrote Emerson in an excellent essay on Milton : and he went on to sketch the fluctuations and progress of Milton's fame. In the same way Mr. Berenson, in an essay on Correggio, has sketched those of Correggio's fame. But Emerson's sentence contains more than one suggestion ; it implies that Fame may in some sort be compared to an artist producing portraits of great men, portraits that are not tangible, like sculptures or paintings, but airy conceptions floating in men's minds. Perhaps the best estimate of writers like Plutarch and Vasari will be formed by conceiving of them as engravers intent on giving black and white representations of the airy portraits to which Fame had given a kind of warmth, colour and vivacity :—life-likenesses, very difficult to seize and define in so many words ; as an engraver, no doubt, finds it all but impossible to render in so many lines the colour and bloom that painting gives. No doubt Plutarch made an excellent engraving of Brutus, after the original masterpiece. And in its turn his engraving became the source of a picture so full of life, colour and puissance, that it probably far surpasses Fame's

portrayal when it was at its brightest. Even during the period stretching from the death of Cæsar to some five years after his own decease, probably there were fewer persons for whom the name of Brutus called up as intimate and precise a sense of contact with a great character than there have been at any time since Shakespeare's drama became an European classic. Though, doubtless, some of Brutus's personal acquaintances may have had that sense of intimate and precise contact with a great personality after a more comprehensive fashion than Shakespeare himself, still even they probably were not able to focus it, or concentrate its elements before the mind's eye in such harmonious proportions as he has done for us. So perhaps we might say that Brutus's Fame never reached its acme till it was embodied by Shakespeare in those famous scenes.

The impression received from a great man's character adds something of value to the impression that even his greatest work can make without it. Who could dispute this if he compared the influence that some work of Michael Angelo's exerts over him with that produced by a work of Phidias? Fame's portrayal of the great Greek sculptor being so shadowy, so empty, compared with her picture of Michael Angelo, we cannot look on his work quite as we look on that of the great Italian, for whom we are conscious of a kind of bias such as we feel when gazing on the work of our personal friends or of those whom we admired when young.

Of all the great masters, Correggio owes least to biographers. So far he has made either a direct appeal, or none at all. Titian—living at Venice, still in the full golden glow of her setting sun, and profusely flattered, if not always punctually

paid, by emperors and kings ; Michael Angelo meditating and moulding in solitary indignation under the bitter sky of enslaved Florence ; Raphaël, whose semi-divine image has been stamped so sharply and deeply by tradition upon the popular mind, that even the non-conformists of modern criticism have no chance of ever rooting out the idolatrous worship of the patron-saint ; all these and more, even if their works faded, would still shine as vividly as ever in their setting of story and commentary. But Correggio, modestly retired in a provincial town, could rely not upon the industry or the capacity of eminent friends, but solely upon himself, to convince the narrow world he lived in of his own greatness.\*

Thus wrote a critic of the finest gift, the most comprehensive preparation (not, like so many a poet and artist, fortunate in an early death, but most cruelly deprived by it of his due effect), in a fragment which he had intended to develop into a book on Correggio—perhaps at one time designed it to fill the very place in Messrs. Duckworth's series where my own work must now appear as makeshift. Arthur Strong was a lover of Correggio : a lover how worthy of that delightful master ! who labours under a severe disadvantage as compared with Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Raphael, or Titian, about whom Fame has been so much more explicit. Their outward appearance has been excellently preserved in works from their own hands or from those whom we can trust. If we could know as much about Antonio Allegri, who is known as Correggio, and picture him before the mind's eye as easily as we can those other great artists, what is it that would then be added to our admiration of his *Io*, his *Madonna della Scodella*, or his *Zingarella* ? Doubtless we shall never

\* Strong's "Critical Studies and Fragments."

know. The outward appearance of a great man, when it becomes a matter of common knowledge, enables us, as it were, to frame Fame's portrait of him, to give the floating traits and anecdotes of which it is composed a more or less definite relation to one another, and to that accustomed aspect of him; just as a frame defines and determines that harmony of spaces and tints and forms which constitutes the composition of a work of art, and can do so much to render an impressive portrait still more impressive. Fame said very little about Antonio Allegri, and what she did say is nowadays scouted as worthless invention, with which his tardy admirers tried to fill the place left vacant by tradition. She told us he was very poor, a miser; melancholy, and over-anxious for the support of his family; that he died of sunstroke brought on by carrying the price of one of his latest works in copper coins over the plain between the vineyards some fifteen miles from Parma to Correggio, his native place. But it is all obviously false, and the knowledge that scores the picture through as discredited is utterly powerless to replace it by anything equally significant.

## II

Still we have his pictures, and can know him if not face to face at least spirit to spirit. Indeed Mr. Berenson tells us confidently: "Centuries had to elapse before emotions so intense as those Correggio felt found expression in literature—in Shelley when he is at his best, and in Keats when he is perfect";\* while Signor Conrado Ricci is impelled on three several occasions to hark back a couple

\* "The Study and Criticism of Italian Art," vol. ii.

of centuries, and quote from Dante in order to find words which shall convey a similar impression to that received by him from works of Correggio. Even though we feel, as we probably must, that such comparisons as these are far too sweeping to deal with so nice a business, we may yet nourish the hope that by dwelling on those pictures, and comparing the impressions received before them with those we have undergone in other circumstances, we may by degrees come to be able to trace an outline portrait of Correggio's character. Then if we are fortunate and destined to be many, some day Fame may claim our portrait as her own and give it to a Shakespeare to fill in with life and power such as few of her first-hand productions can lay claim to.

It might be useful to compare Milton with Michael Angelo and Shakespeare with Titian or Rembrandt, but it can only be confusing to use Shelley or Dante to help us to define what we mean by Correggio. For until what we mean by Correggio is as definite an object of our contemplation as what we mean by Shelley or Dante is, the unlikeness which certainly exists between the temper, the address and the inspiration of their works and his will not be immediately present with us. And this is surely necessary before we can be expected to find and appreciate what points of likeness may exist between them. If we can come to recognise the distinctive temper, the address and inspiration of Correggio's works, then we shall be in a position to gather honey from the wide flights of those daring and busy bees, Mr. Berenson and Signor Conrado Ricci.

## III

Before, however, proceeding to distil from the contemplation of Correggio's works hints towards that outline of his character, which may afterwards have or not have the good fortune to be adopted for a time or for ever by that most variable of artists, Fame, let us consider the question of the value of Fame's portraits of great men. That value does not, I conceive, coincide with the verisimilitude of the likeness. Brutus may have been very inferior to his namesake in *Julius Cæsar*; but the value of Shakespeare's portrayal remains equally great. It is possible that Jesus of Nazareth was both a more interesting and a less divine person than the Christ of this or that "Catholic Church": the value of the Church's conception would be unaffected by the discovery, and remain either less or greater than the truth as the case might be. The portraits of great men must generally be touched by imagination before Fame will consent to sign them. It may be that the truth of the imagination is higher than the truth of history, yet it remains the quality of an invention not of events, for a true imagination is merely one that is truly acceptable, in the sense of being welcome to the most permanent characteristics of the most influential men. Yet it is probable that Fame becomes more and more exacting for an appearance, at any rate, of matter-of-fact foundation to the imaginative traits with which she portrays a great man. She is less and less inclined to embody matters that have an air of pure fancy about them; fairies and miracles are at a discount in her estimation, and are nowadays rarely used save as they may

serve to underline an amiable weakness. Her hero's virtues must shine without such aid to-day. Lastly, the value of Fame's portraits lies in the fact that they are general ideas, and general ideas are the only ideas that the majority of people (even of culture) can obtain in regard to great artists. Herein lies the practical effectiveness of Fame's handiwork, and hereon rests its utilitarian value.

Now the foregoing considerations will make it evident that imaginary portraits embodying Fame's material on a given subject may easily possess a value as great as, or even greater than those portraits which may be called Fame's masterpieces, and that the question of their verisimilitude is an idle point to raise.

## CHAPTER II

### MAIN LINES OF CORREGGIO'S DEVELOPMENT AS A CREATOR

#### I

THE first attempt which I shall make to approach the character hidden behind or revealed in Correggio's works will be by an application of "Morelli's method" as it is called, though it is as old as scholarship: a fresh application of it, I believe, but one the result of which is certain to be inconclusive whatever the degree of conviction it may succeed in creating. Its value for me lies in the ideas it may suggest about Correggio's character. Should the results which it points at come to be accepted "by every one who has any right to be considered as an authority," I might be gratified, but I should still regard my arguments as leaving the question raised open.

#### II

There are four compositions between the main arches that support the cupola of St. Giovanni Evangelista, called pendentives from their position. Damp and mildew have eaten one or two almost entirely away, and all are disfigured by black and white stains, such as one finds in



cellars. The damage is so extensive that the designs may be said to exist for us to-day only in some insipid water-colours made by an excellent and enthusiastic man named Toschi, who devoted his life to saving so much as he had the skill to reproduce of Correggio's threatened frescoes, and died in 1854. His work is neither exact nor sensitive enough to give us reliable information about the peculiarities of the forms of thumbs or ears in his original, still less to convey the freshness and fusion of the manner in which the fresco was applied. Even the general proportions are to some extent modified by his not being able to represent on a flat surface what Correggio painted on a curved one; still, this last objection applies with greater force to the groups in the dome itself than it does to those in the pendentives which we are about to consider, and which form our first four illustrations. Perhaps the figures appear a little compressed from top to bottom on account of the projection of the curve of painted surface forward and upward—and the attendant angels in the upper corners are enlarged out of proportion to those at the bottom, but not to such a degree as to enforce remark.

Now I wish to suggest that of these four compositions that presenting the figures of St. John and St. Augustine was probably designed first, that presenting those of St. Luke and St. Ambrose last.

First I notice that the figures of St. John and St. Augustine are side by side; and that in the three other, or, as I think, later designs the figure of the Apostle comes more and more in front of the Saint, till St. Luke almost eclipses St. Ambrose.

Secondly, I notice that St. John and St. Augustine might be supposed to use the deaf and dumb alphabet in

order to communicate with one another, so direct and emphatic is the action of their hands. St. Luke has one hand resting over the top of his closed volume, and with the other makes a gesture which speaks for itself, and shows us not only that he is speaking, but in what mood or temper of mind he delivers himself. This gesture seems to me certainly more developed than those in the foregoing compositions, while the first appears childishly explicit when set beside it.

Correggio had determined, probably in consultation with the Canons who commissioned him, that each group should consist of an Evangelist and a Father. It was natural that he should commence with St. John, to whom the church was dedicated, and whom it was possible to represent as a young man; and to seat him side by side with St. Augustine would seem the readiest arrangement. The other compositions have obviously the character of developments from this primitive arrangement, till that of St. Luke is easy and picturesque. The positions of the heads indicate the same order; as St. John looked to the right, St. Matthew, who came next, was differentiated by being made to glance over his shoulder towards the left. Because St. Gregory gazes up in rapture behind St. Mark, St. Ambrose was bound to pore over his writing behind St. Luke, so as to form a symmetrical contrast to him. Any one paying attention to the point will easily discover a variety of further illustrations; there is scarcely an item common to all four groups which does not tell the same tale.

### III

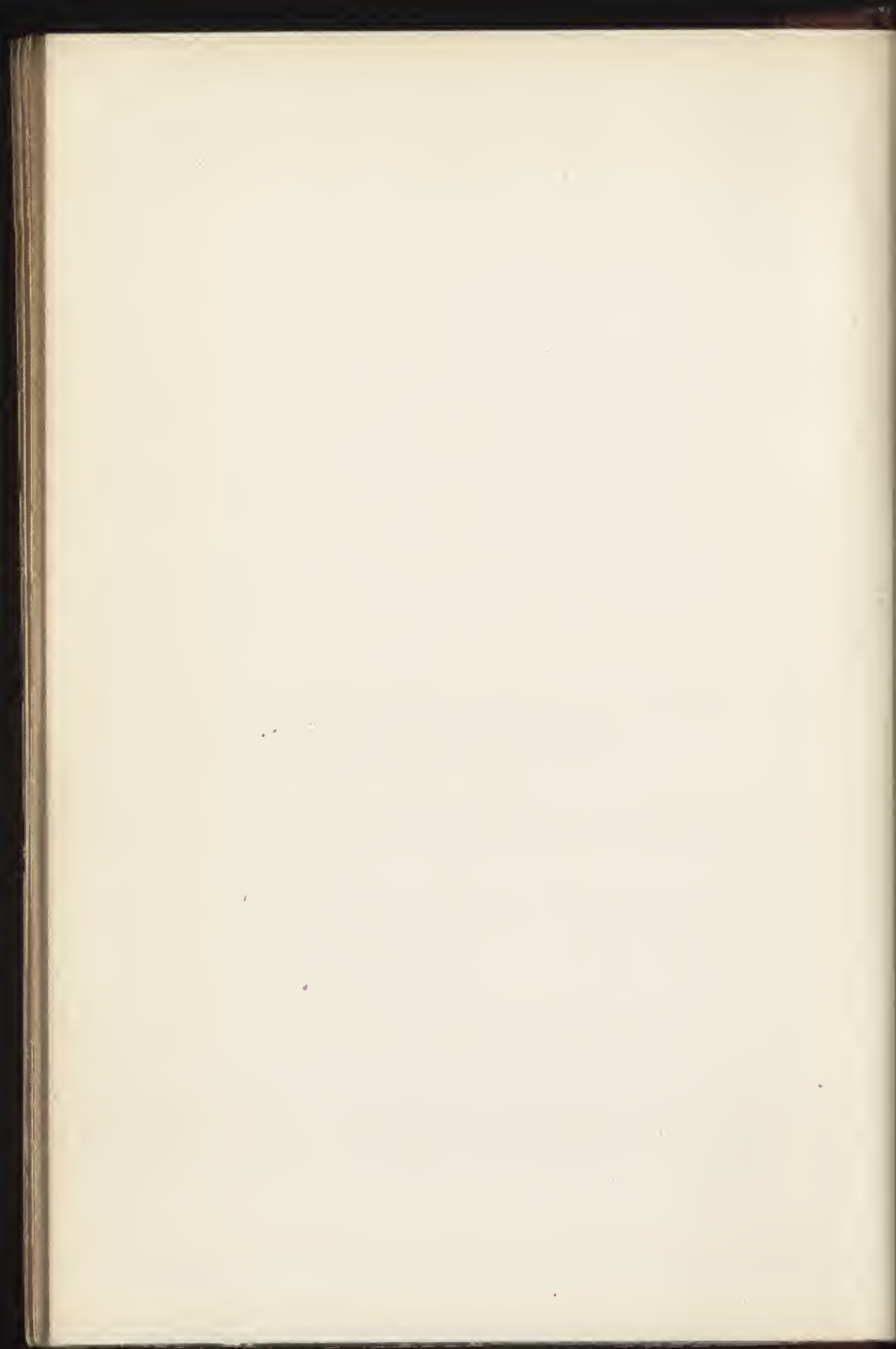
But if a certain novelty unfortunately unavoidable in these considerations should cause any one to hesitate, the



*Alinari*

TWO WATER COLOUR COPIES BY TOSCHI OF THE  
PENDENTIVES IN S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA AT PARMA  
ST. JOHN AND ST. AUGUSTINE  
ST. MATTHEW AND ST. JEROME

*Face p. 34*







*Alinari*

TWO WATER COLOUR COPIES BY TOSCHI OF THE  
PENDENTIVES IN S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA AT PARMA  
ST. MARK AND ST. GREGORY  
ST. LUKE AND ST. AMBROSE

*Face p. 35*

positions of the attendant angels and cherubs will yield us corroboration and carry our inquiry further at the same time. The angel with the palm boughs behind him, in the right-hand top corner of our first composition, is the most easily and simply posed of the whole troop. The one on the left of St. Matthew is the most obvious development from him; the first looks up, the second down; the one is half turned towards the spectator, the other half away, etc. The same relationship may be traced in the poses of those who sit over against them in the opposite corners of these two compositions; and similar relations exist between the four corresponding angels of the St. Mark and the St. Luke.

The cherub under the cloud on which St. John's feet rest retains the attitude proper to the function which made his original excuse for being there. He represents the ethereal power which buoys up the vision, and supports the cloud after the fashion of a caryatid. The cherub at the feet of St. Matthew is developed from him by reversal of action; his arm is up and over instead of under and back, his body is turned slightly away from instead of toward us. The cherub under St. Mark has a new action but still performs the same function. But the cherub under St. Luke has dropped all pretence to this conventional excuse for his presence, and is a pure and happy creation, the first glimpse of the unadulterated power of Correggio that these compositions have given us. Spontaneously he leaps from under the cloud, as though he were escaping, in an angelic game of touch-last, from a companion lost to sight in its shadow.

## IV

The Saints and the Fathers are rhetorical groups; they are machinery employed for the purposes of this picturesque decoration by a master-hand certainly, but without conviction, without quickening their creator or being quickened by him to a more than theatrical existence. It is true that if we accept Signor Ricci's contention that Correggio had never been to Rome or caught inspiration from the Sistina ceiling or the Vatican stanze, we must admit at once that these creations are as original and as complete as Michael Angelo's prophets or Raphael's worthies and apostles. But originality is a small matter as compared with excellence. In one sense indeed Correggio uses his figures far more plausibly than Michael Angelo, whose prophets and sibyls would, if not painted, topple off their sloping seats and crush us whilst we gaze up at them. It is more than possible that Correggio's evangelists present us with developments from them, even if he had only been able to study them in the drawings and verbal descriptions of such artists whom he came across as had been at Rome. There are many, many more ways by which even the direct influence of a great artist may be conveyed than appear to be present to the minds of our fashionable critics to-day. Correggio solves a problem that the Titanic Florentine's great essay had thrust into evidence. If painted architectural mouldings and false walls and colossal figures are to be used, Correggio's is the right machinery to give them an air of probability. It is stupendously clever in the same way as the evolution of the group of St. Luke from that of St.



John is clever: it is a master-feat of ingenuity. However, Correggio did not originate the idea of giving a probable air to the relation between simulated architecture and the figures it is supposed to support. Mantegna had first done this; and one of his pupils had in the Basilica of S. Andrea at Mantua applied it to pendentives in a decoratively sounder fashion than this of Correggio's, with its improbable clouds, too solid to haunt the cornices of such a building even in London.

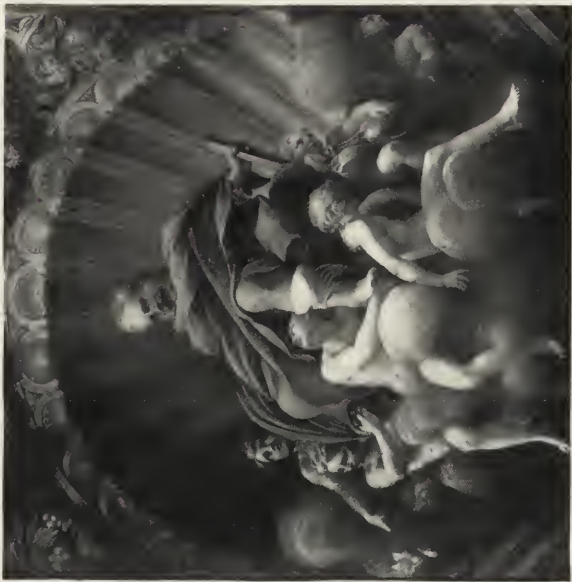
Now, if we forget these Saints and Fathers, with their air of being triumphs in picturesque perspective, and fasten our attention on the last and loveliest of their *cortège* of heavenly children, we shall, I think, be forced to own the difference which exists between an invention that taxes a master's technical and inventive capacity, and one that quickens him and seems in turn to be quickened with his most intimate emotion. We shall feel the difference between the easy and grandiose assertion of mastery, and genial success. We may here remark that the best skill and ingenuity displayed by Shelley or Keats in the matter of complex composition, or what has been rather uncouthly called "the production of architectonic wholes," is child's play compared with the effective ordering of elements which is displayed in the vision of St. Luke, the latest-born of these four pendentives. So we may register a first colossal unlikeness between them and Correggio, which we may hope will at last help us, by narrowing the field of its application, to squeeze a meaning out of Mr. Berenson's startling assertion. Correggio produced these decorations between his twenty-sixth and twenty-ninth year, Keats was twenty-four when he finished "Lamia," Shelley twenty-seven when he finished "Prometheus."

## V

Now I will run over the suggestions as to Correggio's character, temper, address and inspiration which we have drawn from these copies by Toschi, without once making an assertion as to the indescribable quality of pigment, or other visual nicety, but keeping only to the main high road of the treatment of his subject-matter.

We found Correggio developing the conventional elements of his subject so as gradually to forget or overlay their conventional significance and reduce it to a secondary importance, or even to do away with it altogether. We found him almost always developing one figure from another by the most simple process of reversing motives, just as is done in all balanced or symmetrical decorations, only more subtly. We found him when he had carried this process to a certain length suddenly breaking away from it; urged, no doubt, by the same desire to vary and produce novelty, and striking out for himself—creating a cherub no longer with reference to a conventional expectation, but for the sake of the excellence of its airy animation, with which we feel him to have been really captivated, because he captivates and delights us with it.

If we now glance on to the next series of pendentives which Correggio painted a few years later in the Cathedral, we shall find that these also are developments from those we have already studied. We shall find that the second Saint has disappeared, that the cherubs have grown up into laughing boys, whose freedom and happiness bid fair to make them the centre of interest, to the overshadowing of the posturing saints whom they escort. A very



*Atinari*

TWO WATER COLOUR COPIES BY TOSCHI OF PENDENTIVES IN THE CATHEDRAL AT PARMA  
ST. THOMAS



ST. BERNARD

*Face p. 38*



interesting drawing exists of what was probably the earliest of the series, St. John the Baptist, and in it we find the attendant angels are still chubby children, just as the Saint himself is a commonplace model. From this sketch the pendentive has been developed by the mental process I have tried to indicate: while in the two latest of this new series, St. Thomas and St. Bernard, Correggio has again struck out for himself, and replaced some of the angel boys by naked women or girls on the eve of womanhood, whose grace and languor, while in admirable harmony with the swirling clouds among which they float or on which they lounge, seem to have hardly any connection with the Saints in adoration above. In the St. Thomas, one is left almost in doubt as to whether these "embodied joys" are intended to be female or merely sexless, as the poses of those for whom female models were apparently used render their sex ambiguous. But under the St. Bernard the assertion of their femininity is bold and happy.

The gradual growth in importance and resulting transformations of the attendant spirits through the eight compositions tend also to emphasise my contention that Correggio's real heart was never with his Apostles, Fathers, and other holy greybeards. He does the best he can by developing their curly locks and voluminous draperies, by throwing up their eyes and tilting their heads, to give them airs of heaven; but there is none the less a great gulf fixed between them and the high seriousness of Michael Angelo's prophets, or between them and any real "man permeated and perfumed with airs of heaven." They have never thought, they have never suffered; an Italian beggar is as impassioned and picturesque.

In an easel-picture of rather later date we shall find one of the angel-lads from under St. Bernard singled out, transported towards Olympus and declared to be Ganymede. So surely by degrees did Pagan sentiments and motives replace and supersede Christian feeling and subject for Correggio; till we shall find that both the best and the last pictures he composed represent loves of Jupiter.

## VI

If we contrast these indications of Correggio's way of reaching his results with what we know of the way followed by other great artists, their significance will probably grow all the clearer to us. There have been in more recent times men who would have been horrified by the idea of improving on their compositions in public: men who, instilled with the wisdom of Horace's precept, would have kept their works by them, and only consented to give each to the world when it was carried as far as they could hope to carry it. Besides, to show us people pointing at their fingers to explain the fact that they are conversing, when the artist was capable of soon arriving at the truth of gesture shown in the St. Luke, would seem to such men an insult to the public—or perhaps even more a self-betrayal too humiliating to be thought of with equanimity.

Perhaps Correggio's unconsciousness and simplicity in such matters as these is not altogether a personal trait, such as it certainly would be in an artist nowadays, but is partly due to the *practical solidarity* which made him feel somewhat as a house painter does in regard to such things. It was his function to paint the church;

and he began and went on with it with businesslike straightforwardness, troubling himself very little as to whether one part were not quite so good as another, one week's work less brilliant than another's—just as a house-painter is not much put about if one week's work gives him less satisfaction than another, so long as all of it comes up to what he regards as the due standard. His employer is bound to accept good and bad variations, because men's work will vary, and he knew it before he engaged him. So we can imagine Correggio even to have felt, "Well, if it were to do again, I could make the play of St. John's and St. Augustine's hands much more subtle and telling," without ever dreaming that it was therefore his duty to do them again, or that it was unconscientious in him to leave them as they were. This was the best he could do, working as he was expected to work: not, as we moderns are apt to suppose, the best he could do with complete freedom as to expense of time and material.

## VII

There is, however, another point to remark. Instead of elaborating towards variety in the number of planes in picturesque perspective, as Correggio did, it would be quite possible to imagine an artist whose first sketch would be something striking and picturesque like the St. Luke, and who then would gradually work back to the simple directness and obvious intention of the St. John group. We feel sure that Correggio did not work in this direction from the witness of his other works, and because the St. John is, equally with the St. Luke, picturesque and subtle in other respects: whereas an artist like Puvis de Chavannes

would have also simplified the forms of limbs, their modelling, and the draperies, in order to arrive at an impressiveness harmonising with that primitive explicitness in the action of his figures. Correggio also effects an harmony, travelling in the opposite direction: for his St. Luke is all of a piece, whereas the hand play of his St. John strikes one as oddly emphatic and infantile when compared with its freedom and ease in play of light and flow of draperies.

Now the great ceiling of the Sistine furnishes us with an example of this kind of development as frank as that of Correggio. It was begun at the Zacharias end and finished at the Jonas end, and the manner of the hand that painted it and the mind that conceived it have visibly altered between its commencement and its completion. The figures in the earlier half are smaller in scale and less broadly treated. The compositions in the later half have fewer, larger and grander figures. Nor is this development gradual throughout: after the band bounded by the Prophet Isaiah on one side and the Sibyl of Erithraea on the other, there is a sudden break towards the larger and simpler conceptions. This marks probably how much was done from the first scaffold;\* and Michael Angelo benefited in the rest by having viewed his work from the floor. This development of the great Florentine presents a sufficiently striking and suggestive contrast to that which we have traced in Correggio's work. At the same time it is in many respects parallel. The Cathedral pendentives have fewer and larger if not simpler saints,

\* Sir C. Holroyd's suggestion that the whole flat portion was carried out first will not I think recommend itself after a little attention to such points as I suggest.



and larger though more numerous cherubs. These changes were in part dictated by the surfaces to be covered : still they bear undoubtedly some of the significance of Michael Angelo's changes,—that is, they indicate an added growth in largeness and freedom of address. The Florentine's athletes present a still stricter parallel to Correggio's line of development. The first pair are complementary figures ; none of the others are quite so much so, and those at the later end have no relation to one another save that of position and mass, each figure of every pair being a totally new invention.

Again, some of the figures at that end over the windows on the wall suggest an impatience of the fundamental expectations imposed by the central themes, similar to if not so acceptable as Correggio's self-liberation from the expected rhetorical conventions in his roguish cherub and still more unexpected nubile angels. There are men in the costume of those times, whose poses and characters make one think that in them Michael Angelo yawned into a kind of impressionism, and relieved the over-protracted rhythm of his grandiose creations with a surprise approaching that of a caricaturist's hit, though in the mood of a Titanic Velasquez. They are less acceptable than Correggio's self-liberations from conventional expectations : because whereas we feel that Michael Angelo is equal to such a treatment as the subject demands, we feel that Correggio is not, and are glad therefore to find him escape to a theme the treatment of which comes to him with native felicity. And thus we must estimate this tendency to resemblance between their developments as of small importance, compared with the contrast furnished by the fact that

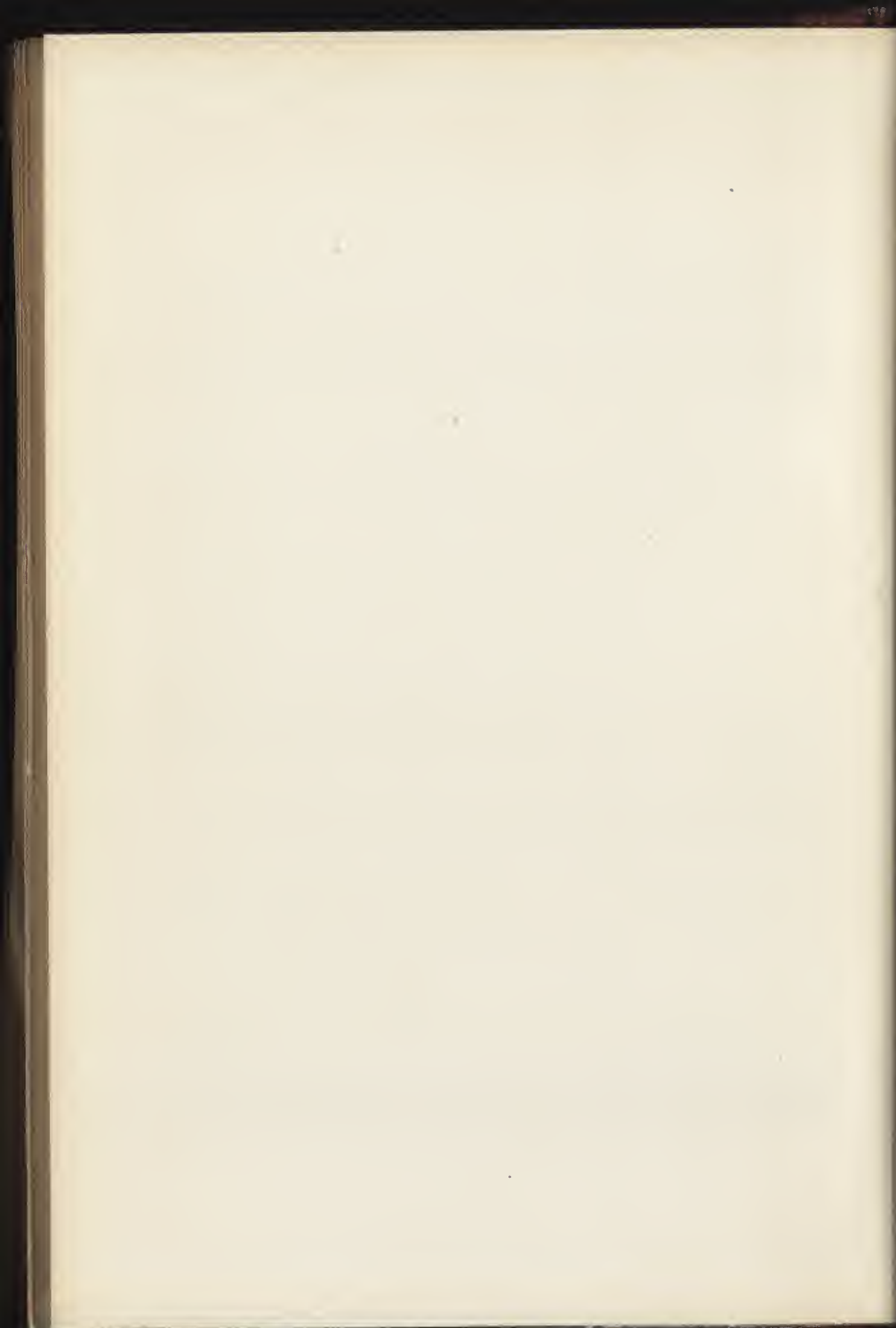
the expression of the inner significance of his subjects was paramount with Michael Angelo—a service in which he indeed found perfect freedom, as his *Birth of Adam* in the second half and *Deluge* in the first half superabundantly testify—whereas Correggio only triumphs by shaking off that bondage—is only perfectly free where his disregard for his pretended subject is perfected. Which is another way of saying that the inner sense of Christian mythology was little suited to his genius; for when he has to treat the *Love of Jupiter for Io*, he remains as central in his treatment as did Michael Angelo when treating the *Birth of Adam*.



*Anderson*

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. BRERA, MILAN

*Face p. 44*



## CHAPTER III

### FIRST INFLUENCES AND EARLY WORK

#### I

IN considering Correggio's early pictures in relation to the artists by whom modern critics consider him in various degrees to have been taught or influenced, it is well to remind oneself that these gentlemen, having perceived a likeness between these artists' work and his, will naturally tend to interpret it in such a way as will make their perception most striking or far-reaching in its significance. For instance, I think almost any one with a fair sense of the comparative importance of works of art must feel the grossness of the exaggeration, when Mr. Berenson says of a picture by a man who is supposed to have been Correggio's master: "Few pictures even in the Louvre can surpass Bianchi's *Madonna* for grandeur of composition, subtlety of feeling, clearness of colour, and quietness of tone." If he were discussing Leonardo's *Madonne aux Rochers* he could adopt no other accent. Signor Ricci again, though with more measure, overstrains the importance of Costa and the Ferrarese to whom Correggio was at first indebted.

The thing to be kept in mind is that none of these artists, not Bianchi, not Costa even, have much save

an historical importance; and our good critics have been misled by what Matthew Arnold called the "historic estimate." These are not great masters: they are not even men of eminent talents capable of enlarging human effectiveness, if not capable of finely directing it. Their painting gathers its chief merit from qualities that belong to the period, qualities which were then in the air, and which men fairly endowed, but of no marked ability or intuitive force, could nevertheless reasonably express; qualities of balance, order, breadth, and gravity, such as this picture of Bianchi's exhibits.

What is personal to such artists is their limitations. They belong to a great period, but that is all they have to do with greatness. In this great and stirring period the Emilia, the district to which these artists belonged, was comparatively barren. Correggio is the exception: the only artist that preceded him, who can even approximately parallel the great Florentine forerunners, Masaccio and Filippo Lippi, is Ercole Roberti; and his influence has not been found in Correggio's work. Doubtless it would have resembled that of Mantegna in quality, but it is not found, so it is needless to discuss it. All that Signor Ricci and Mr. Berenson are really after is comfort for their fear of being supposed to think that Correggio's technical forebears were unworthy of him, or that this painter was a cross of apes. They are deluded by a false analogy with physical science, which makes them suppose that hens and ducks do not hatch cygnets. But in the farmyard they often do; and human society is always at least as sophisticated as a farmyard, generally a vast deal more so. A poet may learn his language from those who speak prose all their lives without knowing it.

Almost in as great a degree as Dante towered above his forerunners, Correggio surpasses from the first all those painters, with the exception of Mantegna, whose influence has been traced in his works. Tissio, known as Garofalo, born thirteen years before Correggio, presents perhaps more analogies in colour and sentiment with the line of development the young master actually took than any other of these Ferrarese masters. The tradition such men represent would have been well-nigh as effective a teacher, even had they not attained to that slight eminence over it which they may truly claim. We shall see later that the re-discovered works of antiquity, and the great art then manifesting itself at Rome and Florence and Venice, were probably of greater service in the liberation and development of Correggio's genius than any of these Emilian stars.

## II

The earliest \* picture attributed with some probability to Correggio is of small importance; and were it next week supposed not his, there would remain merely a little dull painting, timid and conventional, in which the figure of St. Catherine, who kneels while her infant bridegroom slips the ring on her finger, alone has a noticeable propriety, producing an approach to charm. One is tempted to ask if it was not the fortuitous identity of subject between this picture and one of Correggio's best known masterpieces that first suggested this attribution, which is certainly likely enough, but of which there is no kind of proof. Many another picture presenting as strong affinities

\* It should probably be considered as later in date than the Sigmaringen Madonna at least (see Chronological list, page 254).

to Allegri's assured works is perhaps waiting among the lumber, to rejoice the heart of some patient searcher for the resemblances and links that may bind the insignificant to the significant that has superseded it. The whole interest of such a picture is for the historian; and *he* can never be certain that his guesses and deductions from them will not some day seem fallacious.

Several of the ten or twelve works placed by modern critics before Correggio's first assured work have a like value, and need not arrest those who are not devoted to these studies. All these things he is supposed to have produced between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one (1511-1515), as a mere lad. However, four or five among them are not only almost certainly his creations, but beautiful and delightful in themselves; two are, indeed, masterpieces; with these it is a great good-fortune to be acquainted. They alone are a sufficient justification of the fashion which Morelli set on foot. Distorting and distracting though this fashion has proved itself—a magnifying glass for the mite and a mist before the giant—yet, that it has found and drawn attention to these and like pictures among the crowds of rubbish which it has equally signalled and held up, should obtain forgiveness for it from all generous spirits.

### III

The originality of these first master-works lies chiefly in their landscape backgrounds, wonderful on account of the emotional appeal conveyed by means of effects less obvious than fine weather. They must rank with Titian's frescoes at Padua as the earliest known instances of this kind of

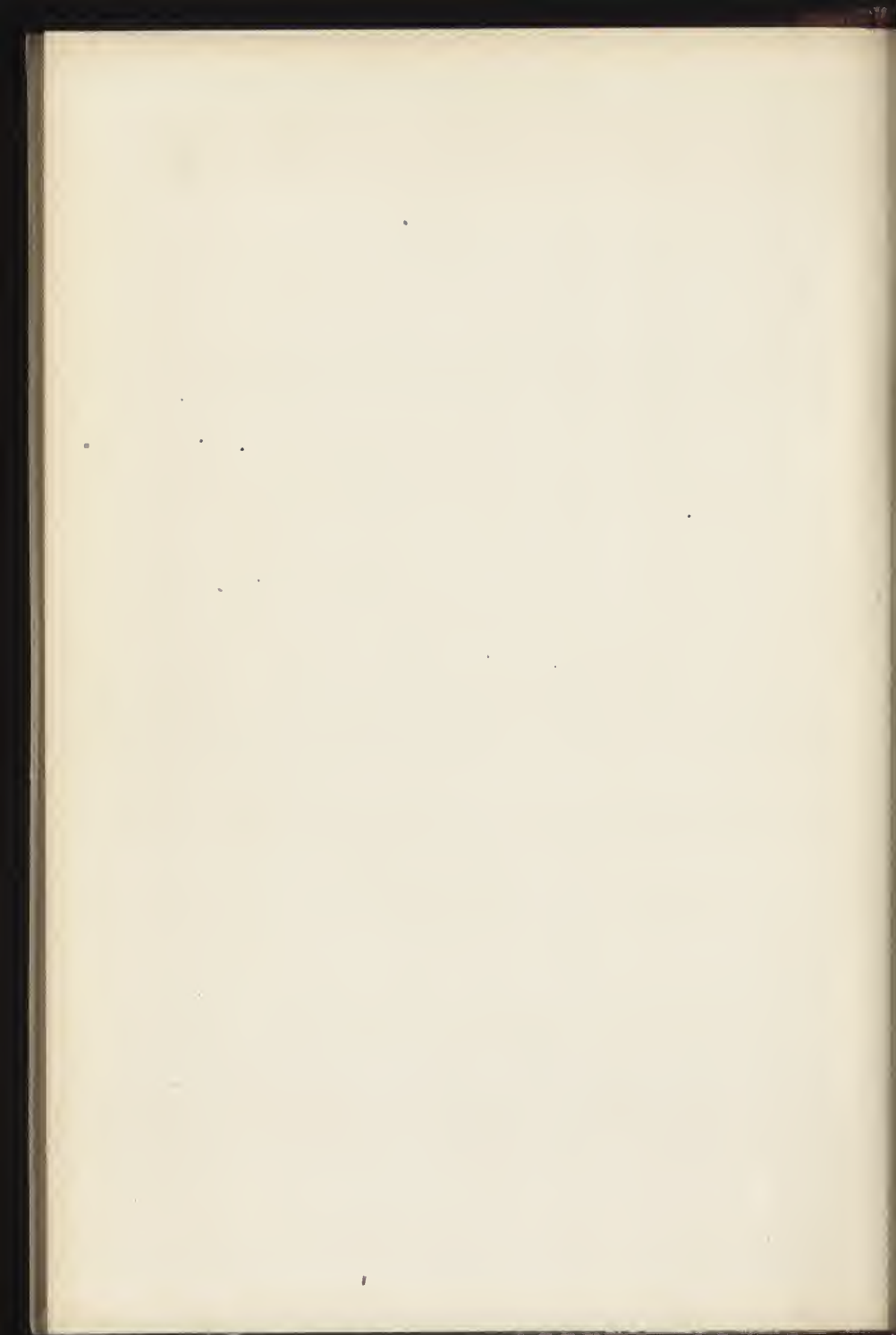




*Ancerson*

THE NATIVITY. IN THE COLLECTION OF CAV. B. CRESPI, MILAN

*Face p. 48*



appeal, and also as among the quite successful. Only a true creator could so certainly have struck such novel harmonies so young.

In Signor Crespi's *Nativity* (*see* Illustration), blurred and stormy fragments of cloud drive across a late evening sky, while three or four ill-grown ash trees, heavy with rain, are stooped and shaken by the urgent wind. The leaf and growth of the ash would seem to have haunted Correggio, and to have suggested one of his most distinctive conventions for foliage, as it is seen in the silhouette branches above the head of St. Jerome in the *Madonna* named after him (*see* Illustration). He has, however, great range in plant and tree forms, and suggests more diversity of kinds than any painter who can properly be compared with him, save Titian.

The attempt to render moonlight in the foreground (where the wind is happily without effect) is such that Signor Ricci calls it the light of early dawn; and it is besides complicated by a visionary radiance from above. Possibly the young artist, who flourished long before so much attention had been bestowed on these matters, may not have regarded the importance of fixing the time of day or the nature of the luminary, but contented himself with combining impressive elements in a visible harmony. If a painter can add to something of the moonlight's charm a warmth and colours only distinguishable by day, we have no need to quarrel with

The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration and the poet's dream.

Indeed such a disregard for the impertinent logic of realism is truly genial, and admirably calculated to

enhance the appeal of a subject which introduces us to a village carpenter amply robed in yellow silk. I would refer my reader to Reynolds' remarks about "fullness of effect in lighting" quoted on pp. 66 and 140.

The success of the picture and of its appeal will be obvious to all who see and care for such things. To gaze at it, or even a reproduction of it, is far better than reading about it. What can words add to beauty seen? Every word of the most eloquent appreciation could be fitted to a quite bad picture, just as a quite bad picture may inspire a most ravishing description. Why should we notice that St. Anne's wimple and the way she holds the infant St. John have been borrowed from a ruined picture by Mantegna? I seem myself to catch an echo of that great master, who had died four years before the lad Allegri came to Mantua, in the stationing of the Virgin, the Infant and St. Joseph on the ground; in many draperies; nigh everywhere save in the landscape and the light; but to dwell on this is like picturing the skeleton of a healthy child while, in its ease and grace, it sports before one: or like attending to some scarcely perceptible fault in a musical instrument which betrays the wood or wire of which it is composed, instead of listening to a delightful melody executed upon it. The amount of satisfaction that by such curiosity can be realised should be trifling. All such borrowings indicate that our Antonio has not yet had time to invent all the requisites for the embodiment of such a vision, therefore borrows or adapts those which to him were the least important. The elements with which he will replace such makeshifts by-and-by will not be developments from them, but matured inventions of his own (*see* p. 35). In the same way we have already

seen him replace the conventional childish cherub by his Ganymedes and nubile Houris (*see* pp. 39 and 40).

## IV

The effects of aerial perspective, to which Mantegna and the other painters whose works Correggio may already have studied, offer no parallel—these, and that largeness of lighting and a noticeable unpleasant neutral grey tint, may be due to contact with the versatile and unequal Dosso Dossi. Mr. Berenson overstates his impressions on this point so as to lend them a suspicious air.

If Giorgione had painted thunderclouds and that large illumination that proceeds from one quarter of the sky when the others lower, a very unintelligent adaptation of this daring success was the most that Dosso Dossi brought with him to inspire Correggio, whose renderings of driving spongy cloud in the twilight, or of a sad, slow, muffled dawn, would have been proof of an originality equal to Giorgione's, even if they had been suggested by his picture in the Giovanelli palace, and its choice of a novel effect. His achievement is as different from Giorgione's as this latter's was from anything that had been done before. In any case, Correggio transcends Dosso, both by his conception and by the delicacy, sweetness, and subtlety of his execution, in quite another measure to that in which the youthful Shakespeare transcended Marlowe. The parallel Mr. Berenson draws between Marlowe and Dosso is a very odd exaggeration, and does the Italian far too great an honour. The *Circe* in the Borghese, in the same way, is a most unhappy instance. Who can imagine Marlowe picturing *Circe* with one dog to represent her varied and

fascinating herd, or pointing her torch like the sceptre of the conventional tragedy queen? What Mr. Berenson saw in this florid emphatic rhetoric to remind him of the "English touch of magic," "real feeling for the fantastic and magical," one is at a loss to imagine! This *Circe* was probably painted long after Dosso's brief and problematic months of contact with the young Antonio Allegri.

There exists, however, a *Circe* attributed to him which displays genuine feeling, though not Marlowe's, nor even magical feeling of any sort. It is now in Mr. Fenson's collection. The goddess is the centre of quite a happy family of animals, inspired perhaps by a youthful enthusiasm for Pisanello's drawings and paintings. This picture is certainly nearer to Signor Crespi's than the blatant rhetorical *Circe* of the Borghese; to say more is to indulge the fancy, but even this might perhaps be done more happily by suggesting that if Dosso told Correggio that Giorgione had painted thunderclouds, etc., he may have also told him how the Venetian painters revelled in leafy trees, and pointed to his own backgrounds to illustrate his remarks. However, there is a world of superiority between Dosso's haphazard and unstructural leafiness and Correggio's trees, already so sensitive to moisture and the wind's caress.

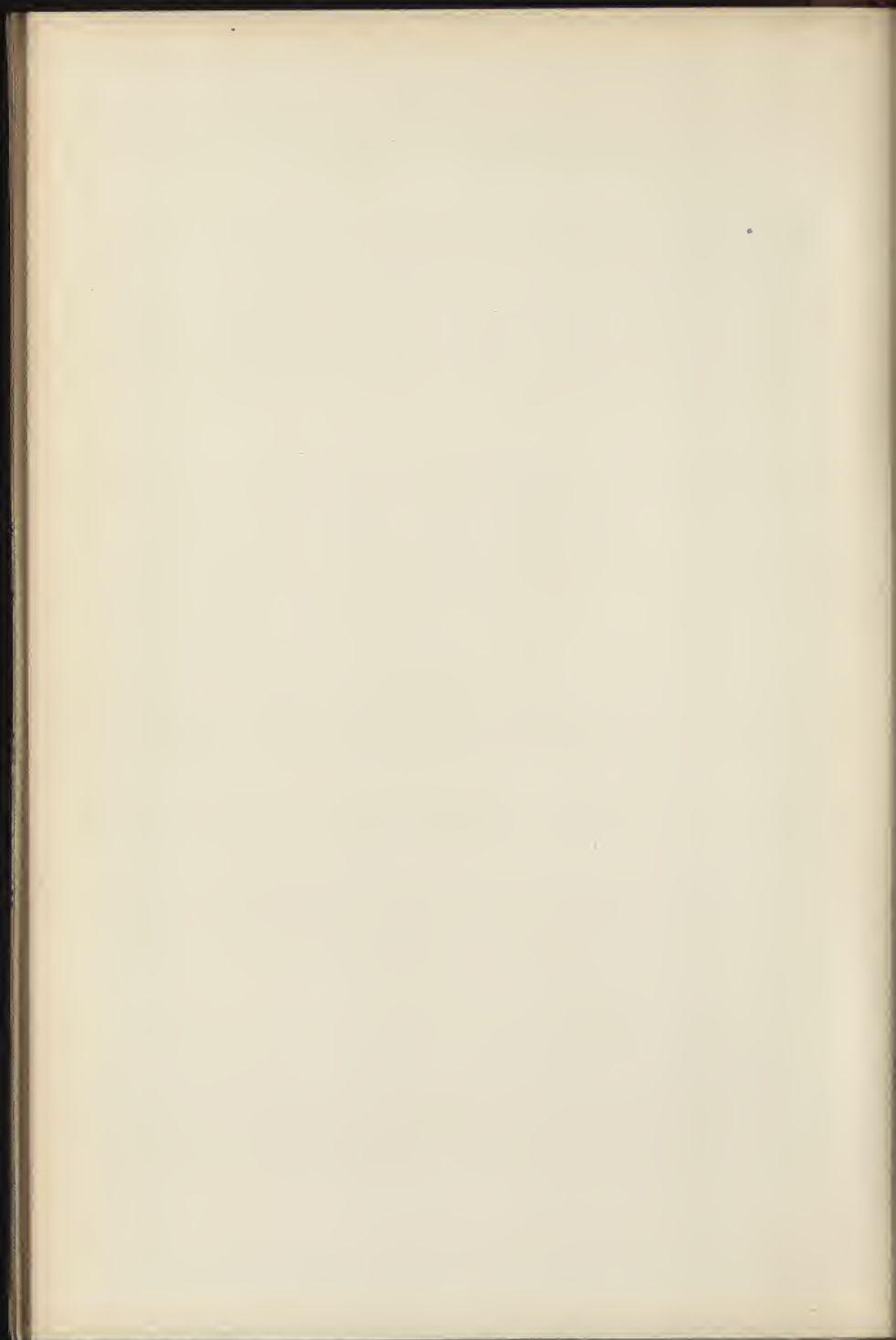
What Mr. Berenson imagines about the resemblance in the use of colour must be discounted by the fact that the younger artist is all at once so very much more the master; it may have been that he learnt from Dosso, but the significance of the fact is altogether misrepresented, unless it is clearly stated that he at once surpassed his would-be teacher. We can well imagine his feeling that could he but have consorted with those Venetian masters of whose



*Hans Holbein*

THE MADONNA AND ST. FRANCIS, 1515. DRESDEN GALLERY

*Face p. 52*





acquaintanceship or friendship Dosso boasted, he would have got something better from them than this latter had obtained: and while learning from his pictures and conversation, blandly, innocently conscious of the immensity of his superiority over this court-painter and fanfaron discourser on his own and other men's genius. Such natures as his, easily fluttered in their emotions, are often capable of an amazingly cool estimation of those whom they do not love, but by whom they are determined to profit.

## V

About this period Correggio probably began to gather more than wind of Raphael's and Michael Angelo's successes. A *Sleeping Cupid*, a work of Michael Angelo's youth, which had passed for an antique when first sold, was sent by Cesare Borgia to Isabella d'Este in 1492, and was probably still at Mantua when Correggio came there; Raphael's *San Sisto Madonna* was at Piacenza as early as 1515. These works young Antonio may have studied; and besides he must have met many who were not only filled with the stir of those great names, but could substantiate their high-flown descriptions with drawings and copies. For such peddlars of other men's methods and achievements, he would often have grateful qualms of respect which might make him for a time magnify their actual talents: and no doubt he would be as courteous as silent in their presence. They might fancy he swallowed them whole at their proper estimation, and he might feel that to leave them undeceived was the way to get most out of them. I merely suggest another way of reading significance into the insufficient facts which we possess—to me it seems more

likely, if we keep a due proportion in our estimate of the gifts of these various painters ; but I am willing to admit that there are a thousand other possibilities. The truth can never be known until Time and Decay restore all that they have devoured or buried. Most likely any one, let alone a scientific critic with a bias for seeing influences propagate after the simple fashion of rabbits, would be astonished by the actual confession of an artist as to the kind and degree of influences he had undergone. In fact, all that is necessary to dispel all confidence in these wise genealogies, is a little personal experience of the creative mood. I think any artist will witness to the futility of similar critical acumen when applied to the genesis of his own works. How much wider must these fashionable guesses be, when applied to work the authors of which are long dead and often forgotten?—though it be true that they lie as much beyond the sphere of absolute refutation as beyond that of conclusive proof.

However, as an offset to the nullity of such scientific pretensions, it should be allowed that these inquiries, if they cannot make a picture act on insensitive and unimagi-native people, at least raise a stir about it, which draws attention that way and fastens it for a time ; and it is never hopeless that where much attention is focussed, some light may be generated,—even if not exactly that hoped for by those who called attention thither.

## VI

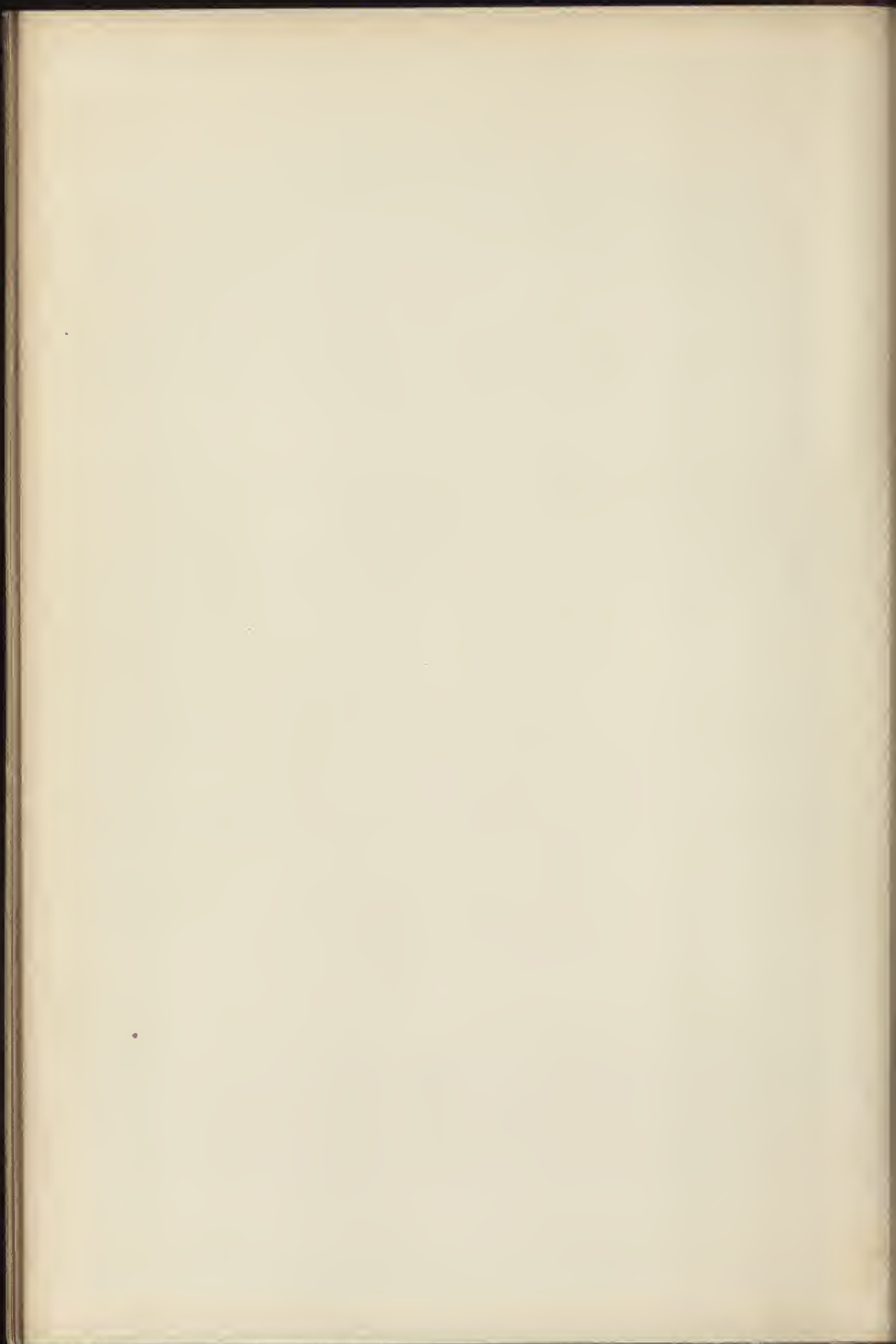
The other masterpiece among these pictures which lie beyond the reach of history in the dim lovely country of surmise, is in England, and Mr. Benson is its fortunate



*Hollyer*

CHRIST TAKING LEAVE OF HIS MOTHER BEFORE THE PASSION  
MR. R. H. BENSON, LONDON

*Face p. 54*



possessor. It represents a considerable advance upon Signor Crespi's picture in breadth and unity of treatment, and is, with Lord Ashburton's *Four Saints*, probably one of the latest of the works which preceded the *Madonna and St. Francis*, 1515 (see Illustration). It is easy to say that this is the most genuinely religious picture that Correggio ever painted; but is it true? When I look at it, I feel what is meant by saying this, but I am not satisfied. Doubtless it is such that religious people may easily find their account in it: they can make use of it without the fear of a shade of scandal even. Does it imply, however, a strictly religious perception, emotion or experience in its author? Does it imply the imaginative realisation of such a perception, emotion or experience, such as a sceptical painter of to-day may rely on to enable him to treat such a subject in an acceptable manner? The gestures, the faces, the landscape, the light and shade, every element that goes to make up the effect, express obviously solemn or painful emotions; there is sadness, there is even anguish; but I smile, I am delighted far more than I am moved. It is difficult to suggest the distinction I should like to hint at. Not only is there no question of a religious habit in expression such as we recognise in Fra Angelico's pictures or in Botticelli's later work, or even in some works of Michael Angelo: there is not, I think, that imaginatively serious realisation of a subject which, whether it be the work of believer or sceptic, has the force of adequate illustration, such as have the works of Rembrandt;—and that quite independently of the religious or irreligious habit of their author's thoughts. We have here the mere religious tradition and pose; an observance once intuitive, still respectfully ceremonious, such as forms

the groundwork of the more part of the religious pictures of that period. To this general traditional attitude, an artist may add some touch of personal piety or playfulness, some fondness or sensuousness, which would affect certain details, but leave the whole essentially what it was; this is the case with Correggio's *Madonna and St. Francis*, and most of the works which precede or follow it. But in the picture we are at present considering, the general traditional attitude is enlivened, not by this or that individual propriety or impertinence in the rendering of some one element of the composition, but by an accent given to the whole;—an accent I believe not born of personal piety, still less of conscious scepticism, but arising in an unconscious naivety; the perception that the subject was dramatic a little afraid of expressing itself, because its supposed import seemed too foreign, too distant, too prodigious to be understood.

Correggio, whom we may in many of his early religious pictures feel to be under restraint, finds himself in this suddenly free. His dramatic instinct has cut the knot, but he does not realise that it will do the same for him always; he goes back to a constrained and conventionally ceremonious rendering of these subjects. Rembrandt, an artist of whom he frequently and in very different ways reminds one, though he remains in the main as unlike him as possible—Rembrandt, in etchings like the *Little Agony in the Garden*, causes a smile of delicious humour to break through the hushed absorption of tragedy, or open out from contemplation of an entire and simple worship, as in the small plate which represents David at his prayers. Now what I feel in gazing at Mr. Benson's picture is not at all an exact parallel to either of these experiences.

Human nature is profoundly beautiful, and its beauties are simple and straightforward, yet woven into inextricable complexity, like fronds of maiden-hair round a dripping well, so that they tantalise and defy efforts to distinguish and trace their origins. We must remember that our artist probably thought in the elements of which pictures might be made; very little of his subject passed through his mind as narrative or in words. And that little had next to nothing to do with its religious significance, but was merely concerned with its human form. With the frank paganism proper to youth, which in him we can believe would be strengthened by something deeper, more enduring in his individual nature, he re-tells the story, having grasped its rudimentary features as an old negro might, almost childishly; half amused to find that even for him it has a charm and power, though he does not remember what the missionary said it implied. Correggio, however, re-tells his story, not in a language imperfectly mastered, not in pigeon English, but with an eloquence he is every day acquiring, every day forcing to realise effects never before attained in it. Elements which we may admit he gathered from Costa or Dosso Dossi, he fuses on the spur of the moment, as it were, in a mood that belongs to one who grasps command before he becomes conscious of his right to it. When he had finished and gazed on the result, he was probably intoxicated by the novelty and impressiveness of his own creation: those borrowed elements seemed as little like debts as for a child the mastery of language seems to constitute a debt to those from whom he acquires its idioms.

I do not find a single trait that marks genuine personal power derived from an inner religious life in any early

work of Correggio's ; this is the only case where an original accent and piquancy, united with the radiant felicity of the achievement, might suggest that the lad was at times not only pious but fervent ; and this seems to me better accounted for in the way suggested above.

## VII

Hitherto we have been concerned alone with the import of this painting ; but this import is married to a genuine and beautiful pictorial expression in which lies its success. No words can give an idea of harmonies fundamentally addressed to the eyes. The balance and proportion of the composition are unique, so are the light and shade and arabesque. Something of these can be discovered in our illustration, but the colour also is strangely impressive, and there is more light and more repose in the actual picture ; the quality of the paint is lost in the print, and the complete work rivets the attention and satisfies the eye in quite another measure. In Lorenzo Lotto's picture of the same subject at Berlin we have an example of how inartistically figures with the same motives can be worked up with incongruous surroundings by a man who has intelligence without temperament, ingenuity without felicity. I incline to imagine "a common ancestor" or "missing link" to account for the resemblance between this and Correggio's picture ; though of course it is possible that Lotto's ill-starred effort sprang from direct misapprehension of Correggio's success, or that this last recognised the quality of an ill-set jewel.



## VIII

Three other "early works" deserve mention: the *Adoration of the Magi* (in the Brera) (see illustration facing p. 44), the *Little Concert in Heaven* (in the Uffizi), and Lord Ashburton's *Four Saints*.

The first is noticeable for the delicacy and minuteness of the treatment, presageful of such a little gem as *The Madonna della Cesta* (in the National Gallery). United with this delicacy is a certain faintness of colour, very characteristic of some of Correggio's later pictures and a complete break with the Ferrarese tradition of strong decided and bright colours. Here for the first time we find pale golds and lemon yellows, smoke-like violets and greys, and milky pinks and chalky reds. Besides, the exquisite refinement and gravity of the arabesque in the Madonna's figure and draperies are a first hint of figures almost Leonardesque in beauty, like the Madonna in the Uffizi *Repose in Egypt* or in the Albinea altar-piece. The resemblances between this picture and that by Dossi (No. 640 in the National Gallery), if they point to his influence over Correggio rather than Correggio's over him (as the greater exaggeration of pose would seem to suggest), only underline the superiority of the recipient over the source of that influence. Dossi's heavy, clumsy lighting and hard treatment of detail and general lack of subtlety are all in strong contrast with Correggio's patient, sensitive, if over-fondled, *tour-de-force*.

The *Little Concert in Heaven*, which passed for a Titian once, might perhaps be given to yet another painter without altering our notions of its worth. It is a pretty,

almost anonymous work, only to be distinguished as Correggio's by certain defects which have been considered as the characteristics of his early work. Otherwise it is suavely harmonious, and not to be reproached, because so little pretentious, with the humdrum limits of its obvious success.

Were the figures more convincing in themselves, the *Four Saints* belonging to Lord Ashburton would deserve the highest commendation; the proportions and general light and shade of the picture are admirable, but in it we have the first blare of some of Correggio's most insulting tricks of facile rhetoric—St. Peter with his mock austerity and St. Leonard with his indecently rolled-up eyes. The charming trait of representing St. Martha leading her tame dragon by a string might, if it were not traditional, rank as a freak of that youthful and pagan detachment from the import of his subject we before noted; just as his two male saints certainly denote that the young artist, though bored by his subject, had not yet thought of subordinating it to his own fancy.

## IX

In this early period we have already seen Correggio make a great advance on that "dry gothic manner" which belonged to Mantegna and his other forerunners, in which every shape has its own colour and is placed against the next, somewhat as in inlay. He has achieved a new force and breadth of lighting, and already, as it were, feels after his great excellence, which weaves the light and shade together with a continual and ever-varied piquancy of relief. His inventiveness has taken several of those

sudden flights by which it discovers its freedom. In the stormy background of Signor Crespì's picture, in the landscape and whole conception of Mr. Benson's, he has proved himself original if ever artist did. It may be doubted whether this last picture and Lord Ashburton's *Saints* were not begun after the *Madonna and St. Francis*, with its large surfaces, had forced the young artist to concentrate his attention on breadth of effect.

Some will think I have made too little of the influence of his predecessors: and I must confess "it is easy to be too sweepingly negative in these matters; easy also to think we can know more about them, and more certainly, than we can." Still it cannot be denied that Mantegna's influence alone has been rendered palpable, ponderable, visible—above all by Signor Ricci's careful tracing of it up to even so late a date as the Cathedral dome. For no other can so many definite points of resemblance or imitation be cited. We can easily make all others swell or dwindle according as we feel we can give them significance or not; they are unseizable, indefinite, questionable. What did this one assured influence mean to Correggio? Why did it not mean vastly more? The old women's head-dresses and the poses of infants which he actually borrowed can hardly indicate the direction of the most significant influence received. When one contemplates the beautiful framing in the palace of Mantua (from which the Hampton Court *Triumph* was ravished) a vision presents itself of a spectacle so splendid, so magnificent, so intensely beautiful, that the wonder seems that Correggio ever freed himself from its spell. Probably he regarded these great creations as he did the Christian story; only he was not forced by the dominant demand of the market to give us renderings of

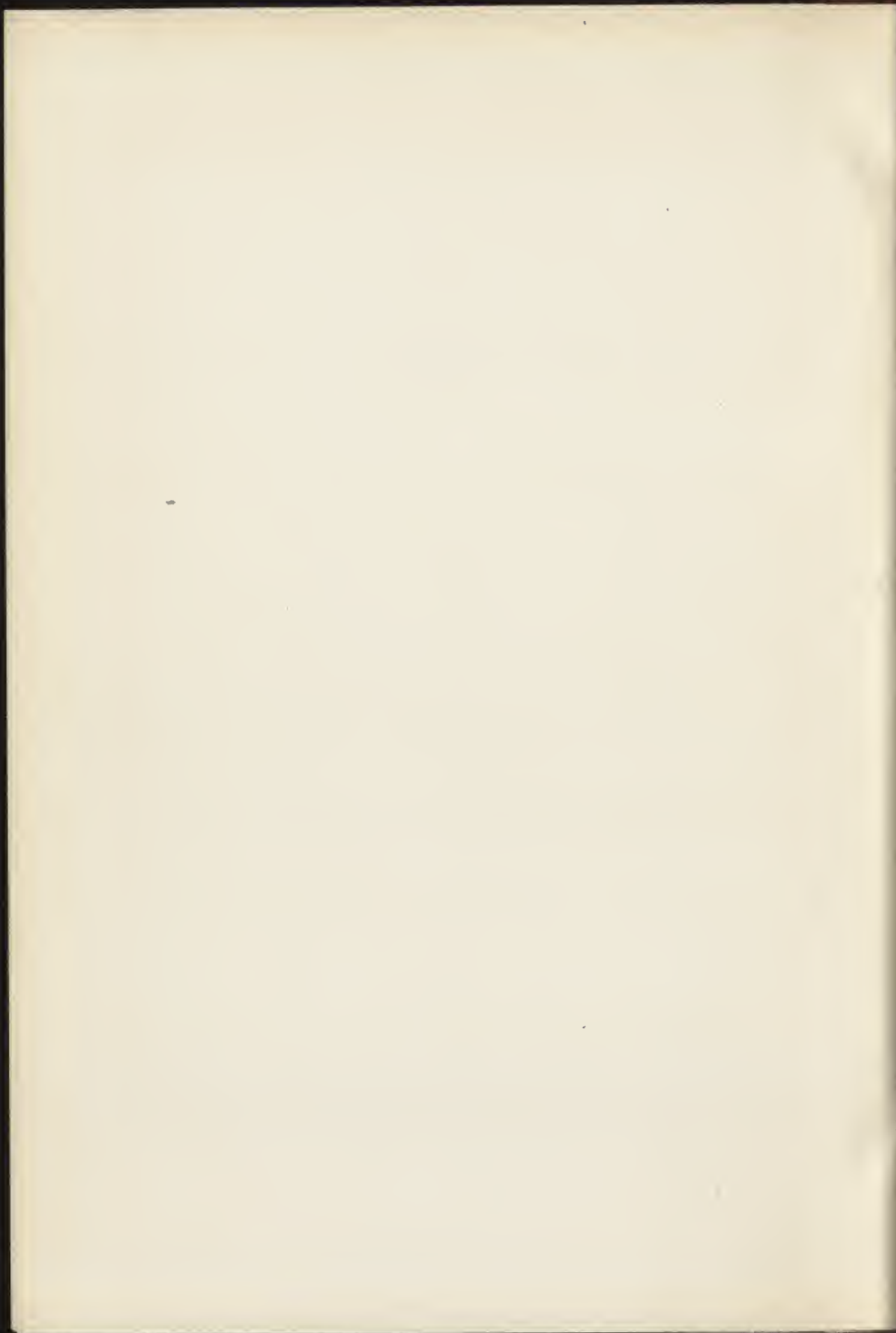
these things—at their best translations into a foreign spirit, at their worst a vapid mockery. The power of the man who created these great things, his fertility, his daring, were sympathised with; were an inspiration to this lad with quite foreign tastes, already strangely self-absorbed with more seductive visions. The great Renaissance echo of Roman magnificence and austerity filled his eyes as a street pageant might overtake, bedim, surround and isolate some dreamy country lad, whose heart was all at home. He could not grasp its details or its import, but its greatness, its splendour, the effort and perseverance which it attested, these haunted him; and, returning to his place, he could no longer be a minder of sheep, but must devote himself to conquering not nations but hearts, never resting till the whole country-side hung on his smiles, was restless for his presence, obedient to his desires. Now Correggio is a painter whose pictures have been more loved by simple people perhaps than any others.



*Hans Makart*

PIPING FAUN OR SHEPHERD. ALT PINAKOTHEK, MUNICH

*Face p. 62*



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOUR GREAT ALTAR-PIECES

#### I

THE first large, the first adequately dated picture by our artist is the *Madonna and St. Francis* (see illustration facing p. 52), painted when he was twenty years old. A deed of August 30, 1514, informs us that Antonio agreed to prepare a cartoon so as to begin the picture in November, and we find that he received his last payment for it in April of the following year.

The result of his half-year's work was a laborious piece of school rhetoric, representing the Madonna enthroned and a couple of saints at either hand. The pose of the Virgin is taken from Mantegna's *Madonne des Victoires* in the Louvre; her throne and attendants are variations of worn conventions. The figure of St. Francis has a suggestion of real passion not for poverty, but for an unapproachable woman; though even *his* gesture is operatic.

Only above in the air do we find the real Correggio, where two naked babies are swimming like fish, one into, one out from the picture. Their attitudes immediately suggest the rapture that such aërial progression would give to children were it possible. They are not conven-

tional, though suggested by a convention, as their hands held together in adoration clearly show. They are unique ; on seeing them we forget the Virgin, her Son, and her *lover*, and other supernumeraries, in order to imagine a huge empty palace of solemn white columns whose vistas open out upon Italy. Here in peace, in the peace of summer and through its fragrant air, now one, now two, anon a little shoal, of air-swimming children who have no need of wings, who have no need of clothes, who have no need of parents, glide in, glide out. Could danger intrude, easily they escape ; could hunger reach them they know where an Eden of fruit-trees is laden with refreshment. Life is for them an exquisite sensation endlessly harmonised with an emotion as soft. When Psyche raised her eyes in the vacant home of her unknown lord, suddenly as the fireflies wink among the vineyards, these rosy day-dreams might have appeared or disappeared about the cornices of those haunted chambers. In spite of their hands clasped in prayer, we are transported, as we gaze at them, to a magical valley already half way up Olympus.

Thus Correggio has dropped us a hint of victories to come ; though he has not realised, he will hardly realise till just before death takes him, in what direction his true freedom lies, where to create will be for him as simple a self-expression as to breathe ; but already he hints it to us by the felicity that came over him, when he conceived these two little air-swimming cherubs. Still this flush of rapture could not master timidity caused by the scale on which he was for a first time painting, and by the importance of such a commission to a young man of twenty ; they are not noticeably painted with more ease than the rest.



## II

Mr. Berenson insists on the parallel between the Baptist in this picture and Raphael's in the *Madonna di Foligno* of the Vatican, between the *St. Catherine* here and in our National Gallery picture of that Saint, in order to explain it on the analogy of Darwin's theory of the common ancestor ; in this case the Bolognese school culminating in Francia, from which on the one side the Ferrarese and Antonio's masters, on the other Timoteo Viti and Raphael had proceeded. However, both Correggio and Raphael probably took the figure from Mantegna's *Madonna enthroned*, belonging to the Trevulgi Family at Milan. Still Correggio may have studied Raphael's work at Bologna or Piacenza as early as 1515 ; almost certainly would have seen drawings after and heard descriptions of his pictures before long, and there are abundant reasons besides for instituting a comparison between the two, even should these applications of the brilliant generalisations of theoretic naturalists appear to us somewhat less secure than to those who indulge in them with such evident satisfaction.

What is directly borrowed in the work of so ingenious and inventive an artist as I imagine Correggio to have been, is what has not vitally interested or moved him. He is spontaneous the moment he has focussed himself. I do not mean that in his most spontaneous creations he owes nothing to the study of other artists' works, but that he has thoroughly digested what he has learned, so that it is transmuted and retains scarcely a trace of the raw suggestions from which it was derived. Borrowed or traditional figures in his early work proceed from lack of

interest or lack of time to attend, through his being absorbed over technical difficulties. Even in workmanship he very rapidly transcends or deviates from his models far more quickly, I think, and far more radically than Titian, Rembrandt, or Michael Angelo did. The size of the *Madonna and St. Francis* must account for its comparative tameness, if it really was painted after the enchanting picture possessed by Mr. Benson. The *Ansidei Madonna* may be said to resemble it in so far as that picture is laboured, cold, and disagreeably under restraint.

Reynolds has said :

Raffaello, who stands in general foremost of the first painters, owes his reputation, as I have observed, to his excellence in the higher parts of the art: his works in *fresco*, therefore, ought to be the first object of our study and attention. His easel-works stand in a lower degree of estimation: for though he continually, to the day of his death, embellished his performances more and more with the addition of those lower ornaments, which entirely make the merit of some painters, yet he never arrived at such perfection as to make him an object of imitation. He never was able to conquer perfectly that dryness, or even littleness, of manner which he inherited from his master. He never acquired that nicety of taste in colours, that breadth of light and shadow, that art and management of uniting light to light, and shadow to shadow, so as to make the object rise out of the ground with the plenitude of effect so much admired in the works of Correggio. When he painted in oil his hand seemed so cramped and confined, that he not only lost that facility and spirit, but, I think, even that correctness of form which is so perfect and admirable in his *fresco*-works.

Though, when making this comparison, Reynolds was certainly thinking of Correggio's most mature works, and



*Brogi*

LA ZINGARELLA. NAPLES GALLERY

*Face p. 66*



## THE FOUR GREAT ALTAR-PIECES 67

was perhaps attributing to Raphael works executed by his pupils, or which had already been repainted, still the main distinction holds; and something of that "breadth of light and shadow, that art and management" which led ultimately to "the plenitude of effect" Reynolds so much admired, are already traceable in Correggio's first altar-piece when compared with the *Ansidei Madonna*; though judged on its actual merits it is less successful.

Raphael's invention proceeded always from the sense that he could improve on something already before his eyes, or at least that it lay in him to better some achievement that by patient analysis and study he had come perfectly to understand. After he had gazed on a Timoteo Viti, a Francia, a Perugino, or a Pinturicchio, for some time, one would say that the figures began to move to music before his eyes, and the rhythm of that music to refine their actions, their features, their limbs and their mutual relations. At last he can resist the impulse no longer, and paints a picture transcending his models but composed of the same elements, re-arranged by the insidious rhythmical harmony which lived in him ever and saved him from all sense of shock, all sense of fatigue. Until we catch this rhythm his figures may look even more theatrical than Correggio's: but once it is caught, they become its vehicle and lose all separate significance. The fact that they more or less closely repeat worn themes—are hackneyed phrases—no longer matters; they are like insipid words set to divine music. Not worthy of it;—no, not for an instant! but married to it, so that we can only enjoy it through them. We must, however, remember that this divine music was later married to less insipid, less formal words; and the recollection of these

throws the Ansidei picture into perspective among the works of Raphael, so that among them it is hardly more important than is the *Madonna and St. Francis* among those of Correggio.

Mr. Ricketts has pointed to the continuity of musical rhythm in the work of Rubens viewed as a whole, which, though in a very different mood and key, may serve to illustrate the nature of this peculiar secret of Raphael's power and beauty. Raphael never leaps to a conclusion, his felicities open gradually like flowers: Correggio's resemble rather sudden gleams of laughter upon a child's face, the sudden animation of a lake beneath a passing zephyr. Raphael informs and so transforms his borrowed and traditional figures: Correggio uses his almost cynically as though they were lay figures, while with them he obtains broader harmonies, till suddenly from their midst his embodied fancy springs to frolic and mocks their solemnity. If we allow this perception to be true, we shall see how unimportant direct appropriation is in Correggio's, how important it is in Raphael's works. Though, even in *his* case, critics generally give a wrong value, and suppose him more indebted for the actual elements of his success than he really is; for even when he created, he acknowledged the sources of his breeding with such a frank and limpid gratitude that he has been supposed indebted for far more than he ever borrowed. Even pictures painted in imitation of him have passed as the parents of his own inventions, as in the case of the *Lo Spagna* at Caën, which Mr. Berenson has so convincingly placed in its true relation to the original *Sposalizio* in the Brera.

Raphael's glory was his temper; that serene docility

which prompted the musical sweetness with which he moved. He is alive and limpid where any other workman would be a torpid drudge. Correggio was as far from this as he was from the earnestness and passion of Michael Angelo; however, as Reynolds says: "Our taste has a kind of sensuality about it, as well as a love of the sublime; both these qualities of mind are to have their proper consequence, as far as they do not counteract each other; for that is the grand error, which much care ought to be taken to avoid." Herein Raphael was more happily natured than Correggio, whose tastes moved much more freely amongst sensuous or even sensual objects, than on the heights of the sublime. This latter is prompted by the grandiosity of that age, when he paints his large altar-pieces, or when he projects gigantic shadows of prophet, apostle, or sage, among the "young-eyed" natives of his heaven. This outside demand upon him for the austere sublime continually involved or deferred his natural flights. He could not have accepted with ready docility the splendid legacy of Mantegna as Raphael did that of the great Florentine forerunners; still less could he have assimilated something of the august intensity of Michael Angelo. Nevertheless, though his pomps and mock austerities be operative, we should not suppose that his subservience to these current demands was merely a waste of his time and effort, for undoubtedly they helped him to attain a larger and more glowing address when he spoke out of the fulness of his heart.

I think it is well to admit that Antonio Allegri lived to no unfailling music, and in no sublime reaction against civil compromise. His immense ingenuity and inventiveness were ready for any task, and were often employed for days together without his nature being once profoundly

harmonised with them. Nay more, the virtuoso in him could rehandle even his most inspired themes until they became affected and stale.

### III

No other great altar-piece was attempted till after the frescoes in the Convent of San Paolo and S. Giovanni Evangelista were finished, by which time he was master of that "plenitude of effect so much admired" by Reynolds. The *Madonna and St. Sebastian* is also in the Dresden Gallery; it was painted in 1525-26, for what was presumably a company of archers, and called itself the Brotherhood of St. Sebastian (*see* illustration facing p. 122).

It has suffered not a little from bad usage and poor amends.\*

The idea of child angels coming on the clouds of heaven, riding astride their swelling domes, was in itself as happy a subject for Correggio as that of the air-swimming cherubs in the *Madonna and St. Francis*. It is a characteristic development, worthy of being noted, that whereas his child angels have hitherto had a conventional age and been all

\* Four vertical streaks of repainting descend from the top well-nigh to the bottom of the canvas, besides other patches. The first streak takes the left half of St. Sebastian and grazes the child above him; the second passes from his right knee through the left shoulder of the Virgin to the frame above. The third and most continuous takes the right arm and knee of the infant Jesus, and, dividing the child beneath him, broadly trickles down the back of San Geminiano. The fourth, starting from St. Rocco's lower hand and the white drapery it holds, leaps from thence to his head, and from thence ascends steadily through the left side of the cherub above him, and so on. There are besides considerable patches under the left arm of St. Sebastian, over the beard and sleeve of San Geminiano, and between the child in the left lower corner and the model cathedral she holds.

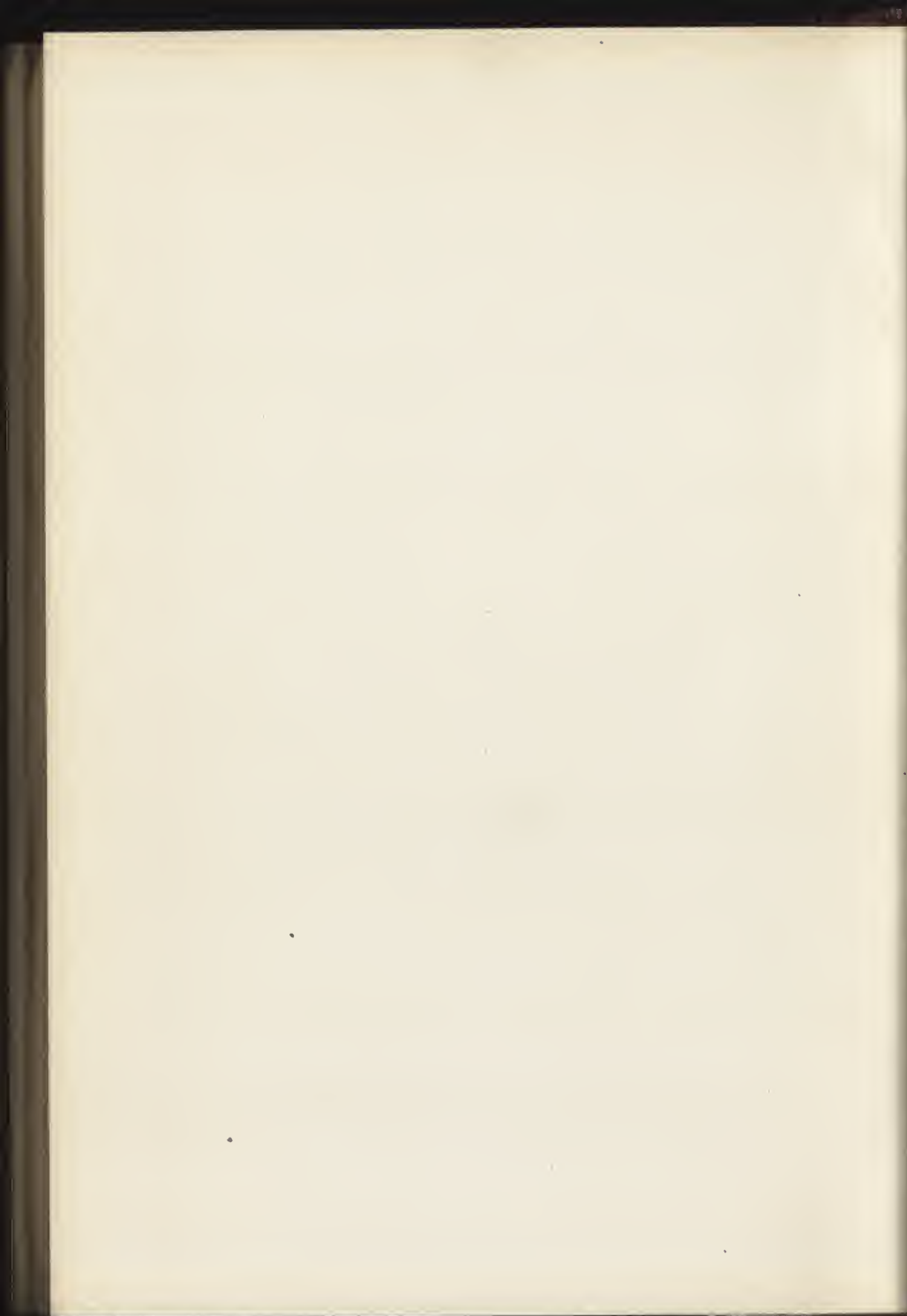




*Anderson*

REPOSE IN EGYPT. UFFIZI, FLORENCE

*Face p. 70*



of one sex, he in this picture dwells most happily on the varieties that age and sex introduce among the real live bevvies that romp about the street door. Would we understand the failure implied in this lovely picture, we must banish the conventional saints in its lower half and substitute landscape—where the heavy shadow of the stooping cloud falls close over copse and field, and, near a rock in the foreground, a single dreamy saint or Magdalen for whom that vision comes;—or it might be, lashed to a tree-trunk, that very Sebastian only, alone where his executioners have left him. Then, instead of disguising as much as possible the single arrow that has pierced his side, the resurrected body of the youth, at the approach of the beatific vision, might have cast it out, and it be seen falling from him; and so his entranced expression find a more easy justification. The actual glimpse of landscape above St. Rocco, the actual clouds and their joyous riders, and the actual light and shade, may provoke such a vision for us. How exquisitely all these elements lend themselves to the painter's art—and such a painter's! The excluded elements are just those forced upon him by the conventional demand.

We must not, however, yield to a weak favouritism, for every subject in any conceivable milieu must present such conventional demands; and though Greek subjects and a pagan milieu appear in some ways more favourable to a genius like Correggio's, yet we have no reason to suppose that, had he been consciously able to distinguish, among the elements and motives in the subjects presented to him, those peculiarly suitable to his powers, the liberal Renaissance world in which he found himself would have refused to permit its conventional demands to be tampered with

to the necessary extent. No ; just as it allowed him to introduce naked nubile angels into the Cathedral, it would not have resisted the banishment of many and many a saint. Correggio was far more constantly productive in a mechanical sense than he was of complete harmonies embracing his whole vision of beauty and synthetizing his whole nature.

The figure of S. Geminiano is just as capably executed and conceived as all the others, but it draws its being from a less profound, a less admirable source in its author's nature. A young man supplying a large demand, naturally industrious, therefore constantly busy, would, however fine his nature, lack the leisure for that careful self-analysis which his great productive gifts alone made desirable. Had he produced less, his development must have been far slower, and the elements which his self-analysis, as we think, should have freed and isolated, might never have become apparent even to himself. It remains, then, for our sympathy and appreciation to attempt what a short and busy life left him no time for, and to separate the perfect from the brilliant, the complete from the complicated, that we may know him at his best, as perhaps he never knew himself.

It may be objected that Raphael was also a young man supplying a large demand, and therefore constantly busy. But we picture him surrounded by a crowd of pupils ; able to collaborate, by reason of that musical insinuating nature of his, with his inferiors, just as he had proved himself capable of collaborating with and replacing his masters. He is there at the centre absorbing the culture of the world, embodying the refinement of an age. Correggio probably produced far more with his own

hand; and if he, too, was absorbing the culture of a world, it was his eyes alone, not his ears, not his friends, not his patrons, not his rivals, that nourished him. There is perhaps reason for supposing him not very ready of speech (*see* p. 236): in any case, if he gave a bias to the refinement of succeeding ages, it was not at all through his personal influence, but solely by his mute, his captivating creations, that he achieved this result. Yes, it is easy to conceive Raphael as by far the more leisured man of the two, and that Correggio's leisure hours were often less worthy of an artist—resembled rather the homely labourer's unbuttoned ease.

## IV

A living artist has called my attention to certain points in the engineering of this picture which he considered developed from hints drawn from Andrea del Sarto. Crowe and Cavalcaselle several times in commenting on the works of Sarto are struck by resemblances to Correggio. These resemblances seem to me far more significant than any that have been found between our artist's works and those of Raphael. It is not so much figures as plastic ideas that are in question. Consider for example, in Sarto's *Madonna dell' Arpie*, painted in 1517, the way in which the light strikes the fore-arm alone of the little cherub behind the pedestal of the Madonna, the roguish smile and gesture of the infant Jesus, and the use made of the nude figure of St. Sebastian in his *Madonna and Six Saints*, painted between 1523 and 24, one year before this picture. And my friend went on to cite the resemblance between the cherub

on whose shoulder the foot of the Virgin in the greater *Assumption* in the Pitti rests, and the similar but freer and less conventional figure under the Madonna in this Dresden *St. Sebastian*, also the use of the shadow of the cloud to make an even dark background, on the right in the one picture, on the left in the other. Lastly, the way in which the apostle kneeling in front of the empty tomb gazes out of the picture at the spectator seemed to him to have suggested the *St. Geminiano* in the *Madonna and St. Sebastian*, painted five years before Sarto's picture was begun. Crowe and Cavalcaselle refer especially to the vapoury yellow glow of light behind figures of the Virgin fringed with cloudy cherub heads, and also to certain draperies.

It is quite credible that Correggio went to Rome, and that therefore he passed through Florence. He would seem to have been of a shy and retiring disposition, so the absence of a record of his passage through those busy art centres need not surprise us, especially as most probably the journey took place just before the frescoes of the Camera were begun, that is between 1517 and 18, when Correggio was twenty-four, while Sarto was at Paris painting the *Charity* in the Louvre. The grisailles in the Camera perhaps show an influence of the earlier grisailles in the Scalzo. all this may be, for to what may be there is no end.

It is clearly impossible that the *Madonna and St. Sebastian*, finished in 1525, should have been developed from hints given in Sarto's *Assumption*, left unfinished in 1531. At least, in regard to all the resemblances noticed between these two pictures by my friend his explanation of them will not hold good. Is it possible that Sarto saw Correggio's picture? He may have returned



*Giani*

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. MARY AND ST. LUCY  
COPY AFTER ALBINEA ALTAR PIECE  
BRERA, MILAN

*Face p. 74*





from France by way of Milan, and would then certainly have passed through Parma; but he arrived in Florence in 1520, so that he could not then have seen any work later than the Albinea *Madonna*. Thus it would be necessary to imagine a second journey to Parma for him. But enough and more than enough about the stubborn dates which cross our eager explanations of these resemblances. The resemblances themselves are our real interest, let them be explained how they may.

There are certain decided affinities between the characters of these two masters and between their respective relations to what had gone before. They are both modern, that is direct and intelligible in their appeal: both seem to recognise average perception in a way that it never occurred to Raphael to recognise it, absorbed as he was in seeking and realising communion with mighty spirits; in a way in which it would have been impossible for Michael Angelo to recognise it, merely because he transcended it so naturally, so constantly. Then they are both pre-eminently ingenious; that is, their signal inventiveness is often wholly devoted to establishing a plausible aspect, to making their treatment and subject, even where it does not inspire them, readily acceptable. If we add to these general traits the facts that each may have had opportunities of seeing something of the other's work, that both were of plebeian origin and as far as we know were never accepted as companions and equals by men of the best culture in their time; lastly, that both are accused of having been over-anxious for their families and of having devoted themselves somewhat sordidly to taking thought for the things of the morrow, to the neglect of a grander future;—we shall, I think, feel that many

resemblances between them may be explained by saying "like causes produce like effects," or "stranger coincidences occur." It is probable that if Correggio saw the works of Michael Angelo and Fra Bartolomeo, which every artist travelling through Florence went to see, he would be struck by the same qualities in their work that Sarto had absorbed, and also by the development from these qualities in the works of this latter himself, which were the most recent talk of the artistic world there.

Besides this, it is eminently characteristic of Sarto that the majority of his pictures are re-arrangements of elements already employed by him. He has as it were certain stock phrases, out of which he composes novel harmonies: the mechanism of his effects is not only conscious, but, in a greater measure than is usual with artists so eminent, a matter of routine;—for instance, the figure which my friend imagined to have suggested St. Geminiano in Correggio's *Madonna and St. Sebastian* is taken out of the *Madonna and Six Saints*, in which it occupies the same relative position, only the face and draperies are new. Mr. Ricketts in his book on the Prado has pointed out other instances of how slight a change Sarto judged to be necessary in order to make a figure serve again in a new picture for almost precisely the same purpose as he had used it before. This also may help to explain how a picture painted by Correggio embodying hints drawn from a study of Sarto's earlier works should seem like a development from his latest, and emphasises what I have said of the extreme rapidity with which Correggio was able to digest, absorb and develop from the hints he drew from others, so that in a year or two he went much farther than Sarto in the six maturest years of his life.

So much then for resemblances which are perhaps more important as emphasising the contrast between the two masters, than as giving play to our modern fad for constructing genealogies of talent by indicating that either master helped the other to attain heights otherwise not in his reach. Correggio easily takes a far higher rank than Sarto when regarded as a creator; he is able to pass entirely out of the ingenious sphere of production into that of genuine inspiration. Even his rhetoric, his ingenuity has a more original accent, is not so dependent on a literal rendering of the model, nor on an empty gravity and dignity. Sarto in his *Last Supper* inherits from Masaccio, and might seem for once almost worthy of that inheritance. Nature is studied and finely turned to account. These apostles impress one at first very favourably compared with Correggio's, merely because they add to what is received from Masaccio, Leonardo and Michael Angelo nothing but the study of new models and a greater ease or expedition; just as it is merely the more frank and easy use of the materials which raises the work above a level that Sir Frederick Leighton might almost have reached. But Correggio's apostles, if their airs are avowedly mock heroic and incapable of deceiving us for a moment, are in that mock heroic world both more effective and more alive. The invention revealed in them is more nimble and more varied; it has a genuine sprightliness and alertness which are, given the necessary defect of serious import, living amends. They belong to his theatre, and are no mere adventitious supers; the heavenly children and youths, his real actors, have a certain familiarity with them, which, if it does not amount to kinship, accepts them as there by rights. Whereas even in Sarto's best frescoes and pictures no one

figure is more inevitably there than another ; these personages have come together and remain together ; it is a great deal if a Madonna has brought her own child, instead of, as sometimes happens, obviously some one else's.

In the one case there is a genuine breath of movement, of emotion, in the too ingeniously ordered assembly: in the other ingenuity has to remain its own excuse. The *Madonna and St. Sebastian* has a certain emotional unity, the ecstatic felicity genuinely embodied in a St. Sebastian, the Madonna and the child Angels is felt to be contagious among the supers also. In the *Assumption*, the supers are merely portraits of people who never witnessed anything of spiritual import, and the actors themselves are stagestruck.

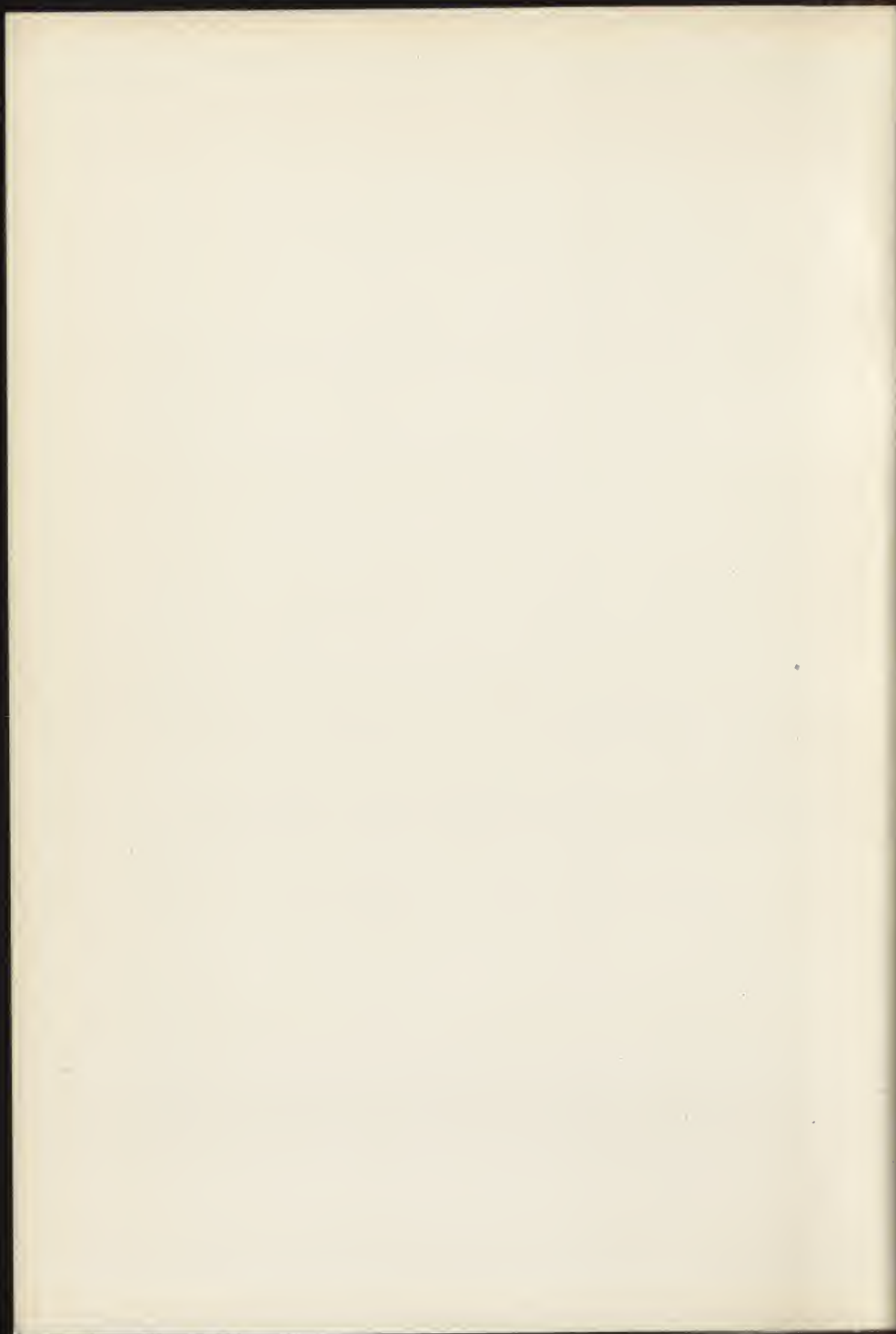
The developing of the play of light and shade as a means of expression whether in a rhetorical exercise or in a true creation may be traced from Fra Bartolomeo through Sarto to Correggio, there are resemblances in the use of colour also. But this development is not a question of spiritual import, but almost wholly one of mechanism.

## V

The *Madonna and St. Jerome* was commissioned in 1523 by Donna Briseide Colla, wife of Orazio Bergonzi. The picture was not finished till 1527 or 28, and the painter received 400 imperial lire—about £15—for it. Often technically considered as Correggio's masterpiece, I must count myself happy to be able to cite the notes of a great painter upon it, notes set down for his own use by Turner, who stood possessed of more of that body of traditional technical method that had its rise in the Renaissance prac-



SECTION OF THE VAULT OVER THE CHIMNEY IN THE CAMERA DI S. PAOLO. PARMIA  
THE TWO WINDOWS HAVE BEEN ADDED SINCE CORREGGIO'S DAY



tice than any artist since has done—for it was the most flagrant extravagance of the nineteenth century to throw this away in hopes of a millennium, which we now perceive it had no good ground for expecting. These notes have been recently unearthed by the enthusiasm and assiduity of my friend, Mr. A. J. Finberg, from the disordered mass of sketch-books and preparatory drawings which have been preserved in iron boxes in the basement of the National Gallery. \*

#### ST. JEROME BY CORREGGIO

Painted upon Panel, upon a rich ground rather green, so that the first colour produces a neutral tone, approaching to the green or brown as cold or warm colours are used. Thus arises the beautiful cold grey through all the flesh of the Infant and Virgin. Some red and a reddish brown sometimes are used in the shadows, for the ground is not relied upon, but in the Breadths the shadows of the drapery are surely (? merely) crumbled over the glazing, which is prepared with its own colour, and heightened by glazing, and as the draperies more or less receive the light or are compounded so they lose their pellucid quality and richness—as the Magdalene. This kept in check by the Vermilion of St Jerome, which always has a ponderous effect. This I do not conceive a defect in the painter but the materials, for a disadvantage one way it contributes to give the flesh softness, and, by his mode of admitting reflections and the demi-grey tint, roundness. In

\* Ruskin had no bent for order and chronological arrangements ; impulsive and over-fond in his reliance on limited intuitions, he failed both to recognise and to use the material which he nevertheless succeeded in confusing. Mr. Finberg has been seconded in his researches by the trustees, They have asked him to put the results of his labour at their disposal, and to re-arrange and catalogue the whole mass of material, on which task for the benefit of the Nation he is now engaged ; and to his affability I owe the precious fragment relating to Correggio's masterpiece which I here print.

his reflections a warmer hue under the brown scrambling tone, as the nature of the subject demands; sometimes pure vermilion, but so hid as to escape superficial observation. His blue draperies are by far the thickest of the colour owing to the power of the ground, but in this picture the blue has been touched, for the harmony is hurt by protruding itself prior (?) to St. Jerome and St. Magdelene.\*

This blue drapery is the skirt of the Madonna, which Turner apparently considered either to have been repainted or, more probably, flayed by over-cleaning of some warm glaze, so that it obtruded itself out of relation with the draperies of St. Jerome and the Magdalen. His remarks on the neutral tone "approaching green or brown as cold or warm colours are used" should be taken in relation to what Reynolds says about the art and management that make the object rise out of the ground (*see* passage quoted p. 66). The upshot of Turner's remarks would seem to be, that the wonderful silver-grey or green shades employed in the flesh by Correggio were obtained by painting into a monochrome or neutral tint version of the picture which had been first executed, and that their effect was heightened by the neighbourhood of heavy or opaque colours like the vermilion of St. Jerome's cloak,—which heavy colours, though unpleasant considered separately, are rightly employed and proportioned to heighten the luminosity of the whole. It is noticeable that Turner makes no remark on the nature of the brush-work, the actual touch of such solitary importance in the eyes of many modern artists and critics, but dwells chiefly on the effects of glazing and

\* Extract from Sketch Book labelled (by Turner?) "Studies in Louvre," these were written in 1802 when Turner was twenty-seven. (*See* illustration facing p. 182.)

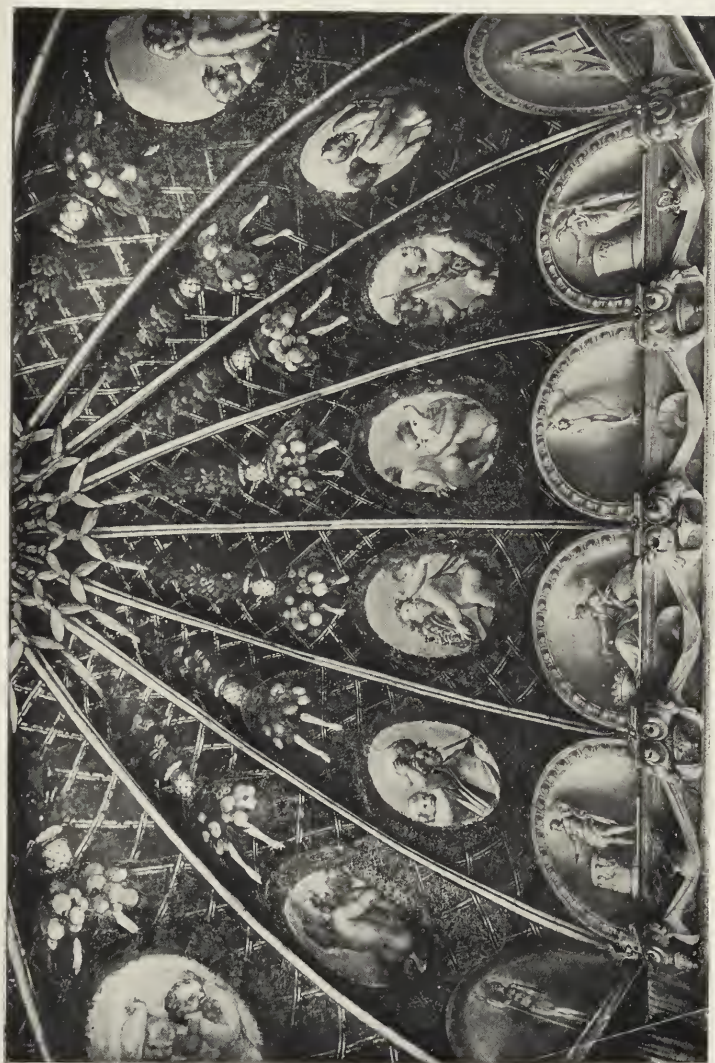


scrambling, processes which are only tentatively reappearing in the work of experimenters to-day.

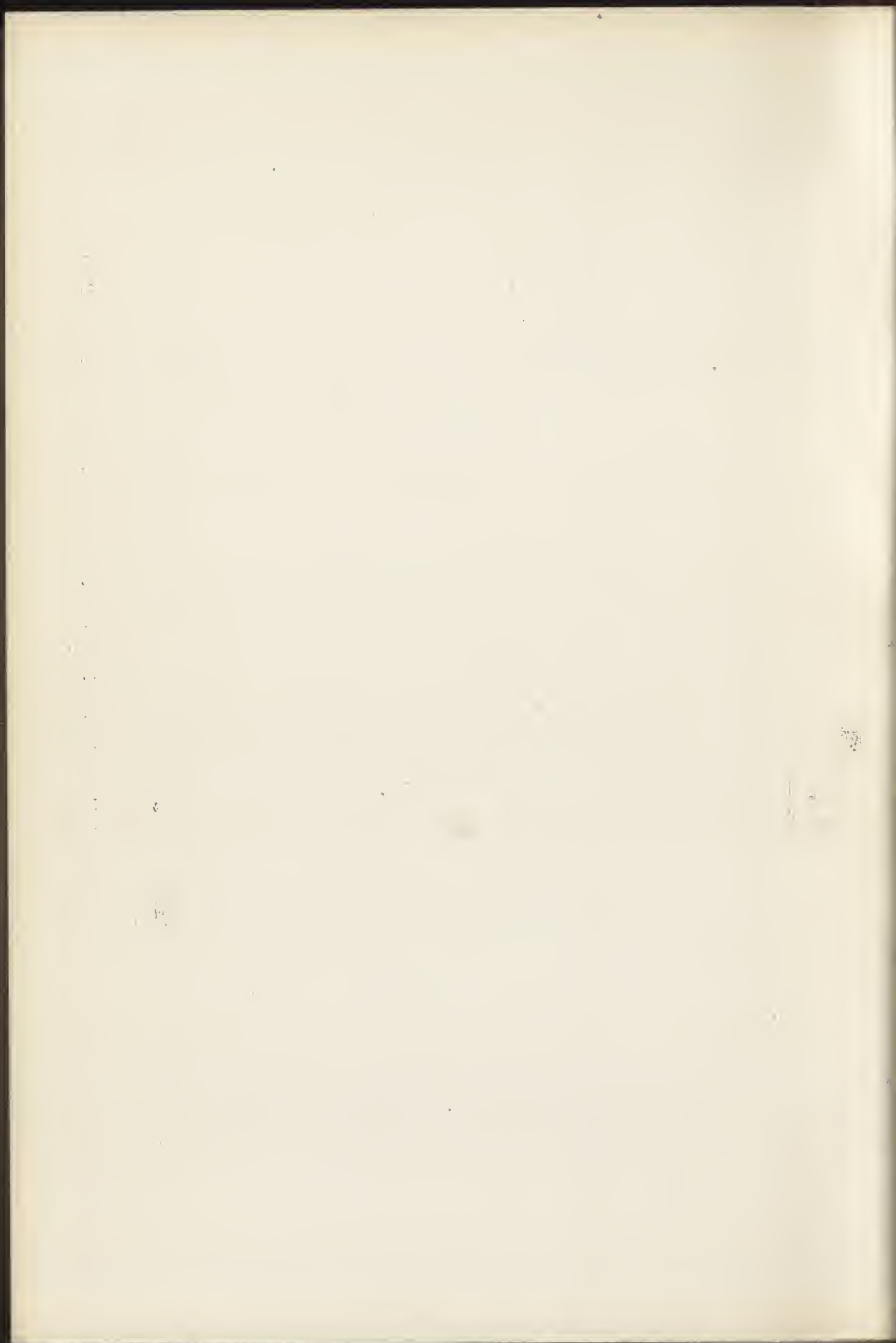
Turner saw the picture at Paris, whither it had been taken by Napoleon. His preoccupation with the means and methods implied in its production is, of course, characteristic of a producer, and though we may admit that he was in a far better position for forming a correct judgment on these matters than any one has been since, we need not suppose that he was infallible, or that his knowledge of traditional secrets would not probably have been such as in some directions to distort the evidence and deceive him. Still his opinion will be full of valid and valuable suggestions to such artists as are now striving to repair the error of their immediate predecessors: and, for the unprofessional reader, may serve to form or strengthen a general idea of that kind of interest in works of art which must for ever remain peculiar to those who are themselves workers. There are critics who would imply that this professional interest must be the foundation of all genuine interest in works of art. There are artists who pretend to recognise no other standard of value. This amounts to saying that one should speak without troubling to be understood, and may reasonably address others in a language that is to them no better than the chatter of daws. Such æsthetic sectaries are like those early Christians who prayed aloud in an unknown tongue, and should be bid to keep their works for private inspection among themselves;—a narrow and self-supporting ring of specialists, let them do without the money of the rich, the enthusiasm of the kindly-natured. For as St. Paul says: “In the church [that is in public] I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I

might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." If painters could exist in a world apart, these pretensions were not ridiculous: but as it is every painter is a man, and as a man a member of society. Thus—their technical powers being equal—that painter who has the largest human nature will be recognised as greatest. Herein lies the pre-eminence of Rembrandt and Michael Angelo. A great delivery appears castrated without a great theme: eloquence without matter is sexless and barren, a sort of ridicule attaches to it. Those who know nothing outside a single art will never know the best of that art: to have but one interest is to be a bore and a nuisance. Human nature is so delightful because it is so various, so inexhaustible; it cries to us, "Ask and ye shall have, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Nevertheless, Mr. Santayana well says that the "Life of Reason" represents a single interest, that of harmony: the harmony of all disparate excellences. Great art may be our sole interest, only when it has absorbed all others, when it is a life; art that excludes other interests is smaller and weaker, in some relation or other it is bound to show itself impertinent. Thus we see where this claim of the artist to represent an exclusive interest comes from; it is a kind of aping the great artist whose interest is inclusive of all others, it is a popinjay pretension.

Now, too, we can see how in these great show pictures supplying a conventional demand, the great artists of the Renaissance were forced to take up a position outwardly resembling these self-limiting moderns. The traditional treatment was really too narrow a field. When in the course of time artists arose whose interests, like those of



SECTION OF THE VAULT FACING THE ENTRANCE IN THE CAMERA DI S. PAOLO



Correggio, were increasingly pagan or non-Christian, whose Christianity even could no longer find expression in the outworn formulas, and whose patrons, or the unspoken conventions of fixed places or functions, demanded none the less a version of the old themes, they naturally came to regard these old themes merely as forming an occasion for developing their technical powers and picturesque invention, addressing the eye alone, or the eye and lighter intelligence; even though if they had had free choice they would have chosen subjects in treating which it was in them to have stirred the depths of our common nature as Correggio did when he painted his *Io*. Thus arose works like these altar-pieces of Correggio, where some playful motive of common affection has to stand all the strain of a ceremonious rhetoric, and, forced into an artificial prominence, becomes affected in its expression.

This is why we find Correggio—than whom no man has treated more happily the playful familiarities between mother and child—giving to these same motives a forced, a mincing, an elaborate and unnatural expression in the *Madonna and St. George*, painted for a brotherhood of S. Pietro Martire and placed in their church at Modena about 1530-31. It has been skinned and repainted till in parts it looks like a copy, and as a whole can no longer represent Correggio's handiwork (see illustration facing p. 202).

Modern critics are apt to view this picture in perspective behind the still greater artificialities of Parmigianino and later imitators, just as our Pre-Raphaelites saw Raphael in perspective behind Mengs, or Ingres, or the Munich School. Mr. Berenson, exaggerating, as is his wont, tells us, "The children with their huge heads and watery

eyes are monsters, that might have been suggested by some fantastic tale of Hoffman's," but then he also tells us about the Madonna that "To understand her appearance you must imagine yourself looking up at her from the bottom of a well," in which the exaggeration is palpable and cannot be referred to a difference of taste or perception. Yet he reminds us that this was once Correggio's most admired picture.

The eighteenth century attempted to make amenity and natural affection both grandiose and polite, setting a higher value on refinement of expression than on reality of feeling, while it derived its sentiments from a kind of Arcadian innocence in complete contrast to what we now look upon as pristine savagery. That grand world was profoundly out of harmony with its sources and supposed functions, and was thus like the artist of the Renaissance in such productions as the *St. George*, which arose from a lack of conformity between the painter's liberated individual genius and the hidebound traditional demands. These it was still his chief function to supply; just as the "Ancien Régime" neither governed nor led, such pictures neither served to enforce religious conduct nor to inspire it. In the one case respect and loyalty were slowly vitiated as manners and position gradually supplanted nobleness of gift and elevation of character: in the other adoration and worship were led astray when a smirking child and a simpering lady ousted Jesus and Mary from the Throne of Grace.

Yet as even in France the "Ancien Régime" was not wholly rotten, but had real ideals and desirable graces, so the artificiality of this picture does not correspond to Mr. Berenson's language. The German Renaissance, the

romantic German Renaissance of Goethe and Schiller, accepted many of its ideals from the "Ancien Régime"; so it also in Mengs, and later in the Munich School, continued admiration of Correggio's *St. George*, in which the refinement and amenity are as genuine as the resourcefulness displayed.

## VI

Thus we have skipped across our artist's activity, pausing only to consider these four great altar-pieces whose dates are certain, and in which he may be considered to have in some measure worked against his natural bent, obedient to conventional demands. Human perfection is so various that in every great movement towards a more rounded nature, an effort tending to narrow the field of achievement may be perceived at work alongside of that which attempts to enlarge and augment human powers. Correggio, whose main effort tends to expand and complete the suavity, the amenity, and the intimacy of the vision of beauty, evades or pays with false coin the demand for dignity, austerity, passion; just as Michael Angelo brushes aside the beauty of flowers, of trees, of gardens, of palaces, of manners, of sociability, in order to insist that the nature of virtue is action and the symbol of action the naked human body, and that its detachment from the petty, sensuous and cloying charms of Arcadia alone renders its integrity sublime.

It is a spiritual exercise to pass from the one achievement to the other without shock or friction, to relate them in memory without injustice or partiality. We should envisage them as we envisage diversity of sex, not warring against one excellence in order to exalt another, but

striving after that elasticity and adequacy of the true life, the life of spirits ; who, as Milton says

When they please  
Can either sex assume, or both ; so soft  
And uncompounded is their essence pure  
Not ty'd or manacled with joint or limb,  
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones  
Like cumb'rous flesh ; but in what shape they choose  
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure  
Can execute their airy purposes.

And in another place he says :

All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,  
All intellect, all sense.

The gift of entire attention or sympathy is a mark of spiritual intensity ; the capacity to apply such integrity to the most varied objects in rapid succession is the mark of spiritual freedom ; and the lines in which Milton expresses these ideas evoke also something of that spiritual sensuousness towards which Correggio's genius would seem constantly to have aspired, and which is frequently radiant in his works.





THE PUNISHMENT OF JUNO    DETAIL IN GRISAILLE, FROM CAMERA DI S. PAOLO  
*Facet p 86*



**PART III**

**THE DECORATOR**



## CHAPTER I

### A GENERAL VIEW OF HIS FRESCOES

#### I

PROBABLY very few of those who, visiting Parma, have given the requisite time to examining Correggio's frescoes so as to receive an adequate impression from them, will be inclined to dispute his right to rank among the few who have enjoyed supreme endowments for plastic art. The old critics who put him beside Raphael, Titian and Michael Angelo will be felt to have been in the right, at least in regard to his efficiency, his vitality, and the acceptableness of his creations. I think we may account these works acceptable as being, in a splendid degree, composed of elements whose congruity with civilised ideals is pre-eminent. With such a large and grandiose address must all speak to men in their public or civilised character, who desire to be received as great ministers, as representatives not of men's current interests, but of their most generous ideals.

In intimacy we may be whispered to, and the low voice may move us as we would rather not be moved with a crowd present, or in ways which the presence of others would distract us from, so that we could not attend or fruitfully receive. We may value our intimate lives higher

than our corporate existence ; but in the gigantic mural decoration of a public building, such as a church, we must admit the splendid propriety of this address. The stanze which Raphael decorated were technically private apartments ; but the Pope is not properly a person, he is an emblem as much as the throne on which he sits or the tiara that he wears. It is the accidental incapacity of human nature for being genuinely emblematical that makes us know that he is a wretched man with faults full-blown upon him. Raphael, by the address of his frescoes, treated these rooms as public places : the *School of Athens*, the *Disputa*, both are addressed to the assembly, not to individuals.

Not only Titian's altar-pieces, but many of his portraits have this character. They are monuments to distinguished persons, which would be most appropriate in a chamber of state or a congress hall. They have that perfect propriety for public exhibition that Greek portrait statues have. There is even less to be deducted from their realisation of our ideal demands on the score of a vanished fashion or rhetorical trick, than there is from the works of Raphael just mentioned or from the ceiling of the Sistina. On the other hand, the limitation of the subject made it more easy to attain this perfection than could be the case when dealing with subjects like the Assumption or the Ascension, with which Correggio was asked to fill his domes.

## II

Now I hope to have made plain what I mean when I speak of supreme endowments for enunciating a public theme and addressing a worthy assembly. Still a man so



THE VISION OF THE AGED S. JOHN. IN THE CUPOLA OF  
S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA, PARMA





## GENERAL VIEW OF HIS FRESCOES 91

endowed may fail as easily as another may in some drudgework, for the due accomplishment of which he was nevertheless furnished by nature with sufficient gift. It was said of a French poet that he could poetically embody anything he would, but unfortunately he had nothing to say. Taine remarks on the injustice of comparing Raphael to Michael Angelo, since he had not suffered like the great Florentine. Taine was right: the capacity to suffer raises a man above the whole world, and raises Michael Angelo immeasurably above both Raphael and Correggio. Dante is with him in this power; and herein consists not a little of the impropriety of comparing the effect produced by Correggio's apostles gazing up at the ascending Christ to Dante's giants in the ninth circle of hell, though that is not the full extent of the infelicity of this comparison. Dante and Michael Angelo are put out of competition by their capacity for suffering. We can have no standard in these things if we do not recognise this fact; the failure to recognise it makes Mengs' whole attitude seem so obsolete to us now, and the recognition of it is one of the points in which Reynolds so immeasurably transcended him and those of his day generally.

But this capacity of suffering that so ennobles—what is it? Nietzsche suggests somewhere that probably none of the martyrs or those who were exposed to the tribulations and persecutions of antiquity ever suffered so intensely as a little Parisian lady during an hour's nervous attack. Certainly this is not the kind of suffering that ennobles. Probably Dante and Michael Angelo were quite free from such suffering as this, and comparatively free from bodily aches or pains of any kind. They suffered at the complex disparity between things as they are and as they might be.

Of course ill-health and neurasthenia may also give occasion for such suffering as theirs, and in that case promote the true ennobling of a soul. But we mean more than this; no doubt it is not merely the pain caused by evil that ennobles; it is far rather the fact that such pain acts as a spur, and prevents the growth of callousness, indifference or cynicism, enforcing the ever-renewed effort to create good, transform evil and endure imperfection. The pain itself proves the susceptibility; but the efforts it provokes are what ennoble.

Still it might be insinuated that Raphael and Correggio suffered more but conquered their sufferings better, being spurred to a more constant, a more effective, a more successful activity than Dante or Michael Angelo. If any one genuinely believes that this was so, he is richer than I can claim to be, and his Raphael and Correggio are enormously superior to my own. Especially is his Correggio the superior of mine, for in Raphael I recognise something of this power. But I feel convinced that no one can in truth be thus persuaded.

Nevertheless, as many of the noblest Greeks escaped from some of the most overwhelming conceptions of Dante and Michael Angelo, we may admit that in a certain measure Raphael and Correggio were happy in escaping from such oppression, and now and again reap a real advantage, a conditional superiority over their more august compatriots. The Greeks had of necessity a more narrow range in which to exercise their gifts. A slighter moral build in like manner necessitates a narrower range, wherein such felicities as still remain possible come more within reach. The extent to which Correggio availed himself of this possible advantage is what our study

## GENERAL VIEW OF HIS FRESCOES 93

of his frescoes should enable us to measure, at least approximately.

### III

It is usual in modern art criticism to proceed from consideration of the parts to that of the whole, regarding the total value as the sum of the values of the parts. This leads almost invariably to a false judgment. The sense of proportion can in this way be trodden under foot even by those who possessed at least the incipency of it—and so at last we have such totally benighted errors as Mr. Berenson's general judgment upon Lotto, which cannot fail to strike with repulsion all who have any natural sentiency left. I am very anxious to avoid this contagious error, and herewith offer my anxiety as excuse for spending so much time over general considerations about these great decorations. Nor have I nearly done yet. I have pointed out two of importance, but I must proceed to others. Largeness of address, as to an assembly rather than an individual,—this must be conceded to Correggio. Profundity of moral impression, as from a passionate participation with the ideal that might be against the real that is, he was found wanting in when compared with Dante or Michael Angelo. But there are further general considerations to which I must call attention, before proceeding to examine the actual population of these imagined heavens.

### IV

In relation to the buildings they decorate, these vast creations like the Sistina ceiling might seem at first sight to have no propriety. The Cathedral at Parma is a

beautiful building, whose most congruous decoration would have been the mosaics no doubt intended by those who built it. Correggio makes no use of the beauty of the building. He might seem to have despised it, to have regarded it as the merest weather-proofing for his genial creations—a shelter the individual character of which forced him into great ingenuity, and, even when all that his inventiveness could do was done, left much of his work inconveniently placed and arbitrarily divided or connected. But the ingenuity which the unsuitableness of the building for his purposes called out in him was, we may surmise, so highly valued by himself and his contemporaries, that in the exultation caused by so considerable a victory, they forgave the building what remained of its inhospitality.

This reflection applies with equal force to the Sistina ceiling. The chapel itself was, however, not nearly so beautiful as the Cathedral at Parma. Yet it was quite as irrational to place those great designs upon its ceiling, although the vandalism of the act may not be so offensive. But it is a mistake to suppose that such improprieties were new or proper to that age. The topmost decorations in Giotto's chapel at Santa Croce are quite as foolishly placed—even more so, for they can never have been even so well seen save from a scaffolding. Now let us hear Mr. Berenson: "Still less would he (Michael Angelo) have departed from his primitive idea, had he been tintured with even a pinch [*sic*] of the fetish principle of our own times, that nostrum which prescribes strict unity of style and epoch in decoration."

Let us consider what perception it is that makes our connoisseur so hot. Michael Angelo's first intention in



THE YOUNGEST APOSTLE. DETAIL FROM CUPOLA OF S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA



regard to the ceiling would have been more in keeping, this we may well admit: but it would of necessity have been a comparatively petty creation. The proprieties of the case (and they were neither fine nor subtle) gave no field for Michael Angelo's genius,—given which it was his first duty to find or conquer a field for it: this he did by sacrificing these proprieties entirely. The circumstances that gave him the ceiling to do were beyond his control. His own perception of the disadvantageous position which his works would occupy in the Sistina, and of the impropriety of their setting, was probably the root of his continued chafing against the fact of having been forced away from Julius the Second's tomb to create them, quite as much as his preference for the chisel over the brush as an implement. It was a combination of irrelevant accidents that had forced him against his better judgment. If he was to paint, he should have been allowed to design or at least choose the building which his frescoes were to cover. We may be sure that then he would never have thought of putting such splendid designs as the *Creation of Man* or the *Deluge* on the ceiling—nay, probably not even the Prophets or the Sibyls as they now are. But he was forced to undertake the ceiling. The vulgarity and corruption of the Papacy, while it gave him such scope as it is not easy to imagine a more settled or a more dignified government affording, stamped this glaring impropriety on his work; just as by its instability it saddened and fretted his life, driving him from one task to another, as Pope gave place to Pope, or even as the humours of a single despot might shift and change:—so that he never was allowed to complete to his entire satisfaction a single work which he began.

Why should Mr. Berenson find it his duty to admire the effects which the instability and vulgarity of the Papacy stamped on Michael Angelo's works? or imagine that he is thereby defending that great creator from a charge which only the cowardice of modern taste saves him from being taxed with? Michael Angelo was right to conquer a field for his genius; even Correggio was right in doing the same at a far greater sacrifice of propriety. But the "imbeciles in present power, doomed, pompous, and absurd!" who set them such tasks are as rightly to be blamed. A standard does not lose its value even when a critic is unable to apply it; and those who know that the whole has often a value very different from that of the sum of its parts will prefer a little consideration to allowing an angry and indiscriminate writer to trample on their sense of propriety. Propriety in regard to the position which a work of art should occupy has always been—even in Greece probably was—beyond the control of the artist: it is idle to accuse him of a defect he had no possibility of avoiding. We can only regret that the social structure has so rarely and in so limited a sense been such as really to co-operate with the individual artist.

The best results with regard to such proprieties have been obtained in periods when the artist was less an individual, while his patron also was an integral part of a hierarchy or other tradition-bound society. The Byzantine church, the primitive Greek or the Japanese temple, the Gothic cathedral, may more often and to a far larger degree have had all their parts in keeping, than has ever been possible under more liberal conditions. We are right to regard such results as the finest of their kind, as ideals which individual effort in the future, favoured by an en-



lightened democracy, may yet, it may be, rival or surpass. But it is just the stupendous achievements of the giant individualities of the Renaissance, that give us a right to suppose that, conditions favouring, an individual may attain results which hitherto have only been possible to collective effort in states disciplined by a rigid traditionalism.

Regarded as a whole, the offensiveness of the decorated Sistine Chapel is only condoned by the action of time and association. The value of this building and its decorations as a whole is far less than the value of Michael Angelo's frescoes—or even those of Botticelli and others—upon the walls. It would have been unpardonable for Michael Angelo to fetter his intentions out of respect for anything that the chapel either was or contained. Its one merit was its spaciousness. Size was a requisite if Michael Angelo was to do his best; space it gave him, and almost adequate light. As a shelter for his work it might have been more stably built and better roofed to keep the damp out. The whole thing is a monument to his magnanimity, and to the indifference or ignorance of his priestly patrons, which has continued since his death.

The interior of Parma Cathedral was probably so disfigured before Correggio commenced his work as to have lost character. There remained little which need restrain his intentions, nothing that could compare with the august authority of the exterior as we now behold it. Much of the surface inside was already plastered over with poor frescoes: and had he wished, it was beyond his power to save the building from complete travesty. This question may be dismissed then, without supposing that such frescoes are a better-than-suitable ornament for such a

building. As a matter of fact the arts by which this building might have been suitably decorated no longer existed ; and the case is exactly the opposite to that of the choir of St. Paul's, where modern vandalism has imposed a hybrid, a cross of up-to-date inanity with Byzantine traditions, on a beautiful Renaissance building, for which appropriate designs had already been offered by two great artists, Alfred Stevens and Watts.

## V

It is not to be supposed, however, that Michael Angelo and Correggio have done nothing to mark their sense of the violation of propriety forced upon them or to mitigate its effect. Both have put great inventiveness and immense painstaking to deceiving the eye as far as possible as to the true facts. It is difficult in both cases to convince people who have no special knowledge to what extent the architectural features which they see above them are merely painted, so cleverly are these features married to those of the building, so well have they been conceived as a link between that and the great artist's conceptions.

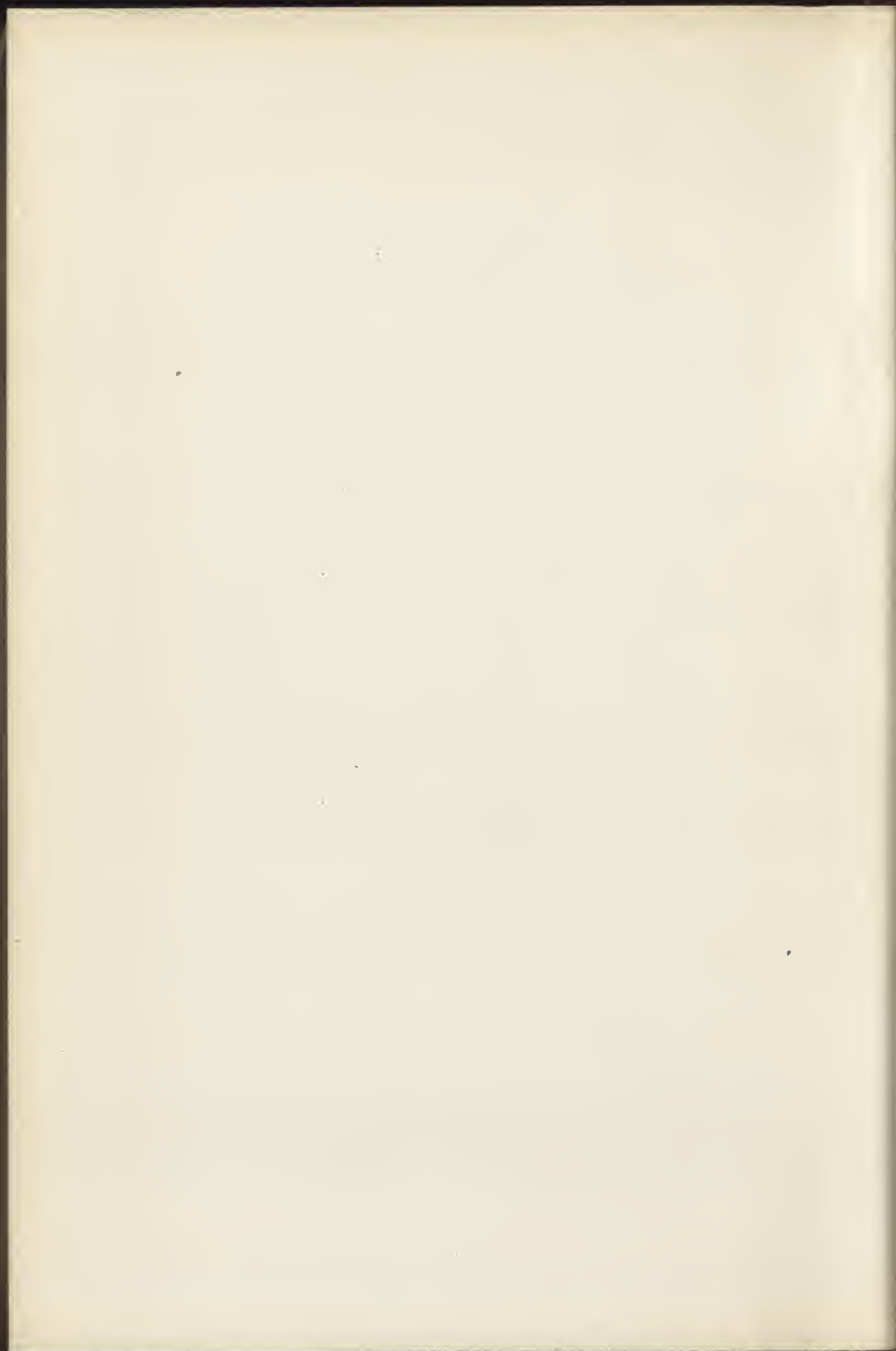
Correggio, following the lead of Mantegna, has attempted to give his figures the appearance of having a natural relation to his invented building. This has forced him to sacrifice a great number of the figures he conceived to what may be described as mere scenic business ; the chief function of such figures being to explain the imagined perspective or mechanical scaffold of his creation. This is counted to him as an obvious superiority over Michael Angelo by some critics. On the strength of it we are told, despite the testimony of our eyes, that Michael Angelo



*Anderson*

AN APOSTLE. DETAIL FROM THE CUPOLA OF  
S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA

*Face p. 98*



had not an equal mastery over foreshortening. Easy it must be for those who never invent or execute to fall into such mistakes. Had Michael Angelo followed the same tactics as Correggio, he must have limited the opportunities for exerting his supreme gifts, even more than had he remained faithful to his first intention of "Twelve apostles in lunettes, the remainder being a certain space filled in with ornamental details," which, as Mr. Berenson points out, was almost certainly in far better keeping with the building. The full gamut of beauty in the human figure as he conceived it could never be presented on any ceiling by one who accepted this dictate of logical realism. He would have been forced to give us another "hash of frogs," all legs and no dignity; prophets whose feet were huge, whose heads were small, whose gestures were difficult to make out. Boy and girl angels and babies are mere animalisms, their health is more important than their manners or thoughts: so they be merry and good-humoured it is enough. Correggio loved their joyousness, and knew how to touch it with a refinement, a delicacy which certainly gives it an ideal character; and to it he was willing to sacrifice the burden of the prophets. Let them be mere flamboyant masts or rock-work on which to hang gorgeous scarfs and banners of drapery, round them his beves may romp and frolic! Michael Angelo loved children and youths too, but their beauty for him is always a prophecy, a dawn, never enough in itself. Thought or courage, high spirit or meditateness must already have commenced for them; at the very least must they foreshadow a Samson or a Hercules. The dignity of human nature impresses him immensely, more than its joyousness. He sees it rather doomed to suffer,

though, in spite of suffering, capable of victory. For the same reasons that it would have been a waste of his time to decorate the ceiling in strict harmony with an indifferent building, it would have been idle to conform to an impertinent logic of realism in regard to the imagined relation between his prophets and the benches they are sitting on, so as to prevent them from sliding off. As a matter of fact, painted figures do not slide off painted benches, nor do they really look as though they would. Even those who cannot explain to themselves the true perspective of their niches do not expect them to fall and crush them. They look at them as a picture, which they are, and they grumble very rightly at having to crick their necks in order to see them. Michael Angelo's figures are really nearer than Correggio's to the traditional methods of times when buildings and their decorations were most of a piece. But the vital difference in quality between these masters does not lie in this. It does not even lie in the former's pre-occupation with anatomical structure, though no doubt his emphasis here is nearly akin to the high seriousness and passionate strenuousness which are his real superiority. In point of technical capacity, in so far as they can be compared despite the immense difference of their tasks, we may regard them as almost equals. It is in the kind of their conceptions that they differ; and here Michael Angelo has undoubtedly the immense superiority. To be employed on the noblest themes for a long period alters the nature of even first-rate technical capacity. Skill takes tone from the company it keeps; and Michael Angelo's strenuousness and elevation impart to his manipulation of fresco a character altogether unrivalled. Correggio may have been more resourceful,

## GENERAL VIEW OF HIS FRESCOES 101

and, as Signor Ricci says, "more sober" in attitude and anatomical development; but to say that therefore "strength and solemnity join hands with dignity and beauty rather in the cupola of St. Giovanni Evangelista than on the Sistine ceiling" is to proffer a judgment palpably absurd. The greater sobriety is really nothing but a greater poverty, a want of intensity, elevation and seriousness; and a grander dowry of these qualities would have inevitably brought with it a comparative disregard for the impertinent logic of realistic perspective, and a proportionate development of that structure most capable of conveying significance, the human form. Still, Correggio did by no means merely fail in being a Michael Angelo, but achieved a result which is as distinct as it is inferior; so that Michael Angelo would be as powerless to make up to us for his loss, as Correggio is to rival the great Florentine.

### VI

There is, however, a general consideration yet remaining in regard to which perhaps Correggio must share the palm with Raphael, and both be judged to have succeeded rather than Michael Angelo.

They created the symbols, the furniture for the beatific vision ultimately adopted by the religious sentiment which became dominant in their country and even all over Catholic Europe. And Correggio, I think, even more than Raphael, divined this need and supplied this want. They first conceived the Heaven of Bossuet and of those amiable Jesuits of whom Joubert said that, compared with the Jansenists, they made religion lovable and loved.\*

\* "The Jansenists tell men to love God; the Jesuits make men love Him. . . . The Jesuits . . . seem to love Him from pure inclination;

To have prefigured this heaven—to have struck that note of sentiment by means of which France was to rescue so much of the culture of the Renaissance through its conciliation with religious feelings it had outraged, is a real achievement; one that it is easy for a Protestant and an Englishman to under-estimate, but which nevertheless has kept French civilisation on the whole dominant ever since their “grand siècle.” Politeness and amenity—in the dome of Parma Cathedral, these debonair and refined virtues are expressed on the faces of angels the most gentle, the least self-righteous, and the happiest ever delineated. The cherubs of Raphael’s *Madonna* at Dresden are heavier, more conscious, less vivacious. Those in the *Assunta* of Titian, if as physically lovely, are more naïve and less intelligent. The spirit of Jesus must assuredly add a civilised envelope to the Titanic visions of Michael Angelo, which are eternal by their eminence rather than their completeness; it must render the rigour of Dante tolerant, and refine the homeliness and crudity of Luther’s heaven. That it should succeed in these tasks is as necessary as that it should renew vigour and fineness of moral judgment for the Latin races. Though much of Correggio’s work is, as it were, tainted by the faults of this fashionable Christianity, it is none the less the first rounded embodiment of the spirit which has characterised its successes.

The great cupolas which contained his frescoes were for a long time forgotten or neglected, but the artists they had inspired carried the essentials of his conception everywhere, and everywhere they were as welcome as French

out of admiration, gratitude, tenderness; for the pleasure of loving Him, in short. In their books of devotion you find joy. . . .” See M. Arnold’s “Essays in Criticism.” First Series, p. 291.





*Altinari*

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST. LUNETTE OVER SACRISTY DOOR IN S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA.

*Face p. 102*



manners and French books. French artists have renewed themselves over and over again at this source. Prudhon, Millet, Baudry, though so different, owed to Correggio's works some of their most distinctive beauties—technical qualities that are far from being capable of divorce from his spirit in regard to Christianity, but rather can scarcely be acquired by those who do not breathe a social atmosphere penetrated by a similar amenity, a similar joy in grace and softness and a similar distaste for the forbidding.

## VII

Lastly, we may find some analogies for that rhetorical efficiency which my reader is perhaps inclined to allow may be the most constant character of these compositions. In the ease of good breeding, which an exterior behaviour so disciplined as to have become a second nature gives, most of us have felt the charm of a similar efficiency and perhaps envied it, even when it was felt to be merely a varnish for some petty vulgarity of interest or mere indifference to finer issues. Its ease and grace and aptness are like that of flying; they thrill us by their mere exhibition as a good skater does, quite apart from any considerations as to the direction in which he is progressing. And so with Correggio's rhetorical effectiveness; it evidently warmed and excited him like a good run over the ice; and we see that after a time he leaves off cutting curves and rhythmical figures, to become explicit and intimate; to tell us about his passion for beauty, what really stirs him through and through, with a frankness like that which has perhaps sometimes surprised us in a well-known acquaintance whose blood has been set tingling from some physical

exhilaration, and who appears quite transformed and far more genial, cordial and even witty than his ordinary moods would have led us to suppose possible. Correggio was a young man; and that a young man should in a large measure abandon himself to the flourish of showy painting or skating or horsemanship has a natural fitness in it, has a genuine beauty like the soaring of birds which seem intoxicated with their ease of motion. And this genuine beauty is disengaged even from Correggio's most rhetorical work, when we contemplate it sufficiently to get past its apparent lack of direction and intention and feel with him the joy of ability. Indeed, the exhibition of a supreme efficiency is never wholly a waste of time and energy, however unsatisfactory its actual application: for such capacity is in itself ideal. And felicitous efficiency, even though it be only in cutting eights, *is* felicitous efficiency—is that ideal character which we desire to see impressed on all well-doing. Even Iago's lying gratifies us in so far as it is efficient. Yes, Correggio was a young man; and that young men should exercise themselves merely to attain capacity for a future efficacy is recognised as in perfect harmony with their condition. Then Correggio, as we have seen, in the glow of such exercise created the cherubs, the embodied joys male and female that people the clouds up-buoying those theatrical visions; and later on, in the Cathedral dome, a whole circle of genii; that gambol upon the topmost cornice of his artificial architecture, with a beauty that has rarely visited even the roofs of temples, with a joyous happiness that must needs escape into the blue heavens before we can make friends with it. Our eyes are filled, but it has not been given to human hearts to make such glee their very own.

## VIII

Then, by an immediate usefulness and greater acceptability, as corresponding to more pressing needs, a certain success as compared with Michael Angelo may be allowed to Raphael and Correggio by those who feel the force of the suggestions which I have made. For the slightness of these I must plead that no heaping together of witnessing traits could prevent them from remaining both indefinite and dependent on congenial predisposition for their acceptance. All three masters are essentially Christian painters, and may be supposed to accept the main ideals of that religion,—its popular character, its preference for the sheep, even the lost sheep, over the self-constituted shepherds. The fact that it invariably addresses the many, though it may only accept the few, might be urged in support of the suggestion that Raphael and Correggio possibly on this side came nearer to the ideal of all three masters than did Michael Angelo. Such ideal considerations must be detached from all dogmatic or even express opinions, if we are to make use of them thus; we must connect them instead with something in Michael Angelo's nature with which he was for ever at war, something of peace and serenity which he could never attain. And in Correggio and Raphael we must connect them with a grace, a rhythm, an amenity which perhaps did not even fail them when they succumbed to their vices or failings; and which we must suppose not only Michael Angelo but all men in their hours of illumination would envy them, however vain they might feel their own efforts to acquire such a grace must for ever remain. Still

if in the supposed case they would desire it, then that grace is undoubtedly part of the human ideal; yet more certainly is it so for those who recognise that ideal in Jesus.

Thus we have considered Correggio's great compositions in five different relations: (1) The fineness of their address as to the worthy assembly; (2) The profundity of moral impressiveness, as from a passionate participation with the ideal against the real; (3) In relation to the buildings that contained them; (4) In relation to the painted building used as a mask to the real building, and the serviceableness of that relation to and its restriction of their ends; (5) In their effect upon the world and the relation of this to a human and a Christian ideal. In conclusion I may point out that intensity of participation with the ideal, by which Michael Angelo is raised above Raphael and Correggio, must undeniably be regarded as that principle, by the working of which the religion of Jesus chooses the few out of the many it calls; and must (in any conception of the ways in which the ideal actually comes to dominate, whether partially now or in a hoped-for completeness) be of greater importance to the evolution of that perfection than the grace and amenity of Raphael and Correggio, though these may yet remain essential.



THE MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE. AT ALNWICK

*Face p. 106*





## CHAPTER II

### THE CAMERA. S. GIOVANNI. THE CATHEDRAL

#### I

IF not from the point of view of those proprieties which concern the relations that decorative paintings hold to the buildings they adorn, there can be no doubt that from that of harmony with the building Correggio's first frescoes in the Camera di San Paolo (*see* illustrations facing pp. 78, 82, 86) are more fortunate than those in the two churches which he afterwards decorated. He may have been freer to choose his subjects; in any case they are entirely pagan.

Though the lady whose apartment this camera was styled herself abbess, she did so merely because the wealth of religious foundations had come to be regarded as an appanage of great families. She assumed functions which nobody expected her to perform, and which were as foreign to her tastes as to her abilities. The Holy See itself was the spoil of adventurers, and the time was wild about persons who asserted themselves greatly in disregard of all forces incapable of immediately avenging an affront. So this lady was merely conscious of obeying the dictates of the virtue within her when she had herself symbolically represented as Diana, and welcomed the invention of the painter who contrived that little naked boys should peep through a trellis woven with garlands from the ceiling of her chamber.

It were a tedious matter to describe this pretty canopy, and our illustrations facing pp. 78, 82, 86 convey a quite adequate idea of it. The colour-effect can scarcely be said to exist any longer, for the dull leaden blue which has been daubed over Correggio's delicately tinted sky, behind the children peeping through the sixteen ovals, has dealt it a deadly blow, and the green of the repainted garlands is probably darker; still, right overhead where the vaulted ceiling is most out of reach, the arabesque of knotted ribbons supporting pendants of fruit retains much of the charm which once extended over the whole. The canopy represented in Mantegna's *Madonna of Victories* in the Louvre probably suggested this happily conceived bower, but Correggio has made an amazingly original development from the hint thus given. Though the nuptial chamber of the Gonzagas, which Mantegna had so beautifully decorated, no doubt haunted his mind, the effect he has achieved himself is more striking, less complicated and more appropriate, if less delicate and less difficult. Quite successful are the monochrome lunettes. The probable derivation of the motives of their designs from antique gems has not as yet been verified. Some, such as the *Punishment of Juno*, are almost certainly original essays in the same field by Correggio himself, and easily surpass in beauty and fitness for his actual purpose those he would seem to have adapted. This, if it is a fact, affords another illustration of that tendency of Correggio's ingenuity to use up the material to hand before resorting to his creative imagination, which I have traced through the evolution of the eight pendentives (*see pp. 32 to 40*).

In the *Punishment of Juno* we come on the first clear example of that magical use of light and shade for which

our artist is famous, and with it a strange resemblance to Rembrandt. This resemblance, which almost eludes definition, would seem to reside in the tendency, which is characteristic of both these artists, to view light and form as means of expression rather than as objects to be expressed, and leads them both to abandon that logical sequence in construction which is represented by outline or anatomical structure. The ease with which forms can be spontaneously indicated counts first with them both, correctness of ideal structure for next to nothing. It is only because Correggio is sensuous rather than dramatic in his appeal that his figures and types are more beautiful, conventionally speaking, than those of the Dutch master. He has none of Michael Angelo's respect and love for structure, the type of body he chooses for his children has no particularity, it is for him merely an element in an arabesque. He puts all his invention into finding variety of motive for their poses and mutual relations, content that in their common physique he has plastic elements of sufficient capacity to allow him to play thirty-two variations on without more than an agreeable and decorative monotony.

The actual form of a beautiful leg seen in violent perspective is often not beautiful in itself, and is used by Correggio not so much to suggest energy as Michael Angelo might occasionally have used it, as to convey freedom, or depth of atmosphere; or the beauty of a spot of light accidentally falling on the calf is trusted to redeem it. This tendency will be found to develop rapidly through his decorative work, just as the tendency to elegance, shown in the grisaille lunettes which are nearest the spectator's eye, being very little above his head, is developed in his pictures. Every peculiarity of individual structure which can help to

express some refinement of joyous emotion will be sought out and welcomed by him. Whole figures will be regarded merely as the mounting for a smile, a glance of ecstacy; till the beauty of the body, instead of being prized as the capable and worthy servant of mind and soul, will be for him the index of satisfaction. The coarse and lumpish cherubs of the ovals are there merely to be happy: even then he could have made them far more beautiful, but it was not worth while; theirs was a common joy, the joy of a troop. In the Cathedral dome we shall find them again grown to boyhood, individualised, refined, but still not set off to us as beautiful, but their beauty itself humbly serving their sparkling glee, which fills them not only as a troop, but each one individually as well.

## II

Nothing retards the general reception of æsthetic judgments more than the confusion of artistic rhetoric with genuine painter-eloquence. The critic can more easily bestow the praise due to the genuine creation on the brilliant or showy counterfeit of it, than draw the distinction between the genuine ability displayed and the indifference or insincerity which sets it tasks in default of a profound impulse or inspiration to employ it. Correggio's decorations in San Giovanni Evangelista deal with apostles and saints; to speak of them, as so often is done, in language which would only be proper were they the creations of Michael Angelo, is to perpetuate chaos. It is a thousand pities that a man of such genuine scholarship and so free from petty pretensions as Signor Ricci should have allowed himself to make such a comparison



*Spooner*

MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE. LOUVRE, PARIS

*Face p. 110*



as that between Dante's giants in the ninth circle of the Inferno and the Apostles in the cupola of St. Giovanni. The old-fashioned criticism of Mengs was luckier than this, for as it gave Correggio the palm for grace, Titian that for colour, Raphael that for taste in expression,\* it needed to make no confusions of this sort. It is natural that Signor Ricci should wish to say the best for Correggio; but he was unfortunate when he hit on the expedient of comparing the figures in this fresco with the austere grand style as we find it in Dante, or as we find it in Michael Angelo. There is really no genuine affinity between it and either the one or the other (*see* illustrations facing pp. 90, 94, 98).

In fact it is impossible to praise Correggio for the treatment of his subject; he cared only very superficially for the intellectual, moral or spiritual significance of these curly-headed and curly-bearded old gentlemen. Milton's treatment of nymphs and sea-gods in *Lycidas* is far more really Greek than Correggio's treatment of apostles and doctors of divinity is Christian. He wished them to be so far studious or severe or inspired as that anybody should see at a glance that they were meant to be so. For Raphael such figures and personages were forms of life, aspects of culture, precious to the grandiose musing hour, an ideal company among whom he aspired to be numbered. They meant more, far more, than Greek divinities did to either him or Milton, for these were only the fairy tales, the ornaments of those ideal master-minds whose company they sought, for whom their flattery was

\* "Correggio, whose genius was formed from grace, could not endure things of such expression. The powerful, the sad, the expressive in him, are like children's tears, which soon are converted into laughter; and his anger is like that of a beautiful mistress." Mengs' Works, p. 66.

sincere,—Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato. Correggio, on the other hand, when he paints Io, treats his subject not as one who admires and flatters Pindar or Phidias, but as one who is stirred by a similar impulse, who naturally invents like a Greek. But he is bored by an apostle; he will paint his model lolling on a cloud, as he might loll on a bluff among the hills, tired of slinging stones at the crows, rolling his eyes up as he follows the slow-soaring eagle far above him. These are gigantic bandits and shepherds. “Yes,” some arguer will cry, “and the apostles were not dissimilar; they were poor fishermen,” &c. &c. Why are they naked then? why have they draperies, not clothes? Correggio did not intend to insist on the simplicity of their origins, every one who looks the matter in the face knows that he cared not a pin for these things; he did not even trouble to make them all physically fine. The same model whom Signor Ricci finds unworthy to be the butcher of St. Flavia, so meagre and poor his physique, is here exalted, all his faulty proportions upon him, among the clouds; where, seated next behind St. Peter, he makes a picturesque contrast enough. There is indeed that youngest apostle, whom Signor Ricci calls a Greek god; but if we are to quibble about literal intentions, what makes he here so youthful, when St. John is old and white-haired? Was there a younger apostle who died before he was twenty? Correggio is the first to tell us of him. Yet these glorified ones are strictly the eleven fellow disciples of St. John. Nay, even the beauty of these figures, let alone their significance, is not subtly or delicately rendered, like the beauty of the athletes of the Sistina; there is that element of coarseness already noted in the cherubs of



the convent; even the Greek god has something of this taint (*see* illustration facing p. 94).

Yet these rather lumbering figures produce a stupendous effect; they form a magnificent pattern, finely composed as light and shade, rendered with vigour and ease, glowing and glorious as colour. Nay more, the whole composition is in very truth opened into heaven; the physical exhilaration at least, proper to the whirl and wonder of an upward vortex through which the terribly damaged central figure stoops in flight, is rendered with a keen zest. Out of this blaze and depth of glory both voice and gesture seem to say, "Behold, I come quickly!" to the only remaining disciple, weary with age and the watching of visions. Still we must not swallow all the praise usually lavished on the foreshortening and the solution of the problem of aerial perspective. These figures are designed from a point of view far above the floor of the church, the only structural convenience from which to see them; and if they are only seen from thence, much of their effectiveness is thrown away. No doubt Correggio himself had the advantage of a scaffolding. The foreshortening does not present the obvious exaggerations of many figures in the Cathedral dome, but it is, as always with Correggio, rather plausible than exact.

Why should critics continue to persist in giving every great master the same qualities? In literature this method has been in a great measure abandoned. Even in the eighteenth century it was not necessary to make Correggio share with the austere Dante or the sublime Michael Angelo. Reynolds could say:

The little elegances of art, in the presence of these great ideas thus greatly expressed, lose all their value, and are,

for the instant at least, felt to be unworthy of our notice; the correct judgment, the purity of taste, which characterise Raffaello, the exquisite grace of Correggio, . . . all disappear before them.

He could say in passing, too: "If he (a student) is incorrect in the proportions of his figures, Correggio was likewise incorrect." To ignore such main distinctions, in order to exalt the artist we happen to be writing about, is to go back towards chaos indeed.

I have called these apostles lumbering figures; where then is the "exquisite grace of Correggio"? Reynolds is thinking when he used this phrase of Allegri's greatest excellences, of figures like the little Cupid playing touch-last under the St. Luke in the pendentive. He had not been led to reflect that the fresco in the cupola was that work of Correggio's which, with most plausibility, could be cried up into competition with the Sistina ceiling, as possessing a few qualities not attributable to that august creation. He was instead possessed by a developed sense of proportion that gave him a horror of confusing kinds and degrees of excellence.

Signor Ricci has some excellent observations on the colour-scheme adopted by Correggio, on the avoidance of large masses of red, on the splendid masses of green and blue, which with the white clouds and draperies give such a rich warmth to the flesh tints—in all which Correggio is as original as he is delightful. The cherubs, too, which squeeze themselves between, or rest upon, the clouds, show a marked advance on those in the Convent; though there is among them perhaps none that quite rivals, as a spontaneous creation, the merry little rascal that leaps out from under St. Luke.



OLD ENGRAVING OF A LOST HOLY  
FAMILY—PERHAPS THAT FORMERLY  
KNOWN AS THE "BIANCONI  
MADONNA"

*Face p. 114*



But not only are the colour-scheme and the pattern of light and shade of high excellence: the manner of employing the material that renders them, the fresco, is of the very finest quality; and here, it may be, a comparison with Michael Angelo is not without excuse. The man who could do this could do anything possible in fresco; only it was not in his nature to conceive figures of such distinction, or colour harmonies so grave, so tonic, so pure, or subtleties of modelling of form so restrained in their elegance, so free from abandonment or any looseness, as it was the supreme prerogative of Michael Angelo's executive to be employed upon. Skill, as we said before, takes tone from the company it keeps. Yet perhaps it is true that one feels the effort more in the work of the great Florentine; not a disproportionate effort, but a very great one. The Emilian master has a richness and an abundance which, without any confusion or over-insistence, with ease express his comparatively insignificant, comparatively plebeian conceptions.

### III

It was this absence of confusion and exaggeration which led Signor Ricci to prefer to make a comparison between the San Giovanni frescoes and those of the Sistine, rather than to use the later ones in the Cathedral for that purpose—which purpose is, as I have pointed out, a regrettable foible. Yet it is in the Cathedral dome that Correggio arrives at his supreme expression in this medium;—(but also, it must be admitted that certain of his failings blossom there into unprecedented extravagance). However, one has disappeared—the physical coarseness of type; there are no more heavy or clumsy

figures. Even apostles, though no more significant as conceptions, have a flourish and a swagger, which can scarcely be so reproached. Their heads, like their gestures, are operative and devoid of subtlety; and it was an indifference akin to that which contented itself with coarse and crude types that bore to make them so. But in those parts of his subject into which Correggio's heart went, as in the adolescent angels, he is master of an un-failing grace and elegance; and this mastery has changed the accent of his conceptions even where these are, so to speak, perfunctory or distasteful to him. Again, this new gallery of scenic apostles is more obviously, more straightforwardly designed merely to aid the general impression of a soaring whirlwind and upward maelstrom of joy and glory,—down through the centre of which, out of the heart of light, tumbles the welcoming angel, past the circling choirs of ransomed worthies, towards that cloud of juvenile angels who bear upwards the Virgin Mother of God.

There is a musical rapture, a rushing overwhelming transport of emotion, that actually makes one forget that this glorious scene is presented as seen from beneath; that it is formed in so great a part of sprawling legs, the possessors of which show an other-world indifference to earthly notions of elegance and decorum. A divine innocency;—yes, but such that on earth it has given an equal immortality to the witty exclamation of one of the canons when looking up he cried, "A hash of frogs!" To every one whose eyes follow Correggio's lead into the height of heaven, these words are repeated, and fail not to beget the same smile which first welcomed them. After we have laughed we may consent to Titian's generous

reply to those who suggested that they had paid too much for such a work, "Turn it upside down and fill it with gold, and you will still come short of its proper price." No one could better enjoy the exquisite quality of the colour. Stained and ravaged as it is to-day, no words could be too strong to express the rapturous harmonies suggested and in parts subsistent. Lighter, warmer, more radiant than the St. Giovanni Evangelista decorations, there are portions which may truly seem to realise our happiest dreams of the lost masterpieces of Grecian painting. Yet though this glow of glorious colour is added, it must be admitted that there are sacrificed also to the main effect of an upward swirling cloud of innocent and happy beings triumphing over all things of the earth earthy, not only propriety but qualities far more important to the highest artistic success; dignity of bearing, and that complete satisfaction in the beauty of form which such violent foreshortening must necessarily often curtail; and that coherence of articulation as of a poem every word of which receives its due clearness, roundness and weight, without diminishing the rush and volume of the rhythmical effect. We have here rather a rhapsody, many parts of which become inarticulate and unmeaning, though the whole be overwhelming, though certain passages be of a quite unsurpassable lyric excellence.

It is worth while noting that this incoherence is not due, as in the early poems of Keats and Shelley, to lack of artifice and dependence on an emotional flux, but is on the contrary ingenious in its source. Correggio had accepted the idea of following out the logical consequences of the position of his fresco in his design, with a juvenile haste and zest; and all his prodigious ingenuity was devoted

to realising this mechanical problem. The youthful genii who sport on the roof of his supposititious building above which the circling cloud of the heavenly host is seen, these youthful genii—perhaps the loveliest of all his creations—are themselves seen at a disadvantage on account of the violent perspective necessitated by their actual position. There are many lovely faces, many exquisite arms and shoulders, but comparatively few beautiful figures. These lads have nothing of the complete and statuesque beauty of Michael Angelo's athletes; they are bewitching, but by snatches, gleams and glances, the full divinity of which baffles the most patient gaze. It is true that this effect is very much heightened by the lamentable condition of the fresco, scaled and cracked and festered by the damp; but the presence of this obvious and accidental difficulty also gives us patience, as we feel the painter is not to blame—patience which might very possibly be exhausted sooner were it removed, so that we could make sure how much that baffles us is inherent in the artist's design (*see* illustrations facing pp. 138, 142, 146, 150, 154, 158, 162).

The youthful riders in the Parthenon cavalcade are grave and dignified, the winged Cupids so frequent in Tanagra terra-cottas are childish and mischievous; the gaiety of these heavenly playfellows was never dreamed of in Olympus. It is more than Greek, it is Christian. Milton's rosy cherub youths are too severe, too reserved; Shakespeare, when he says,

There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest  
But in his motion like an angel sings  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls,

comes very near to it. This rapture of heavenly innocence





*Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach*

NOLI ME TANGERE. PRADO

*Face p. 118*



that is not unintelligent, that is familiar and playful in its guise, is a creation and an ornament of the Church that has stooped lowest in its mansuetude towards mere humanity, accepting the best and purest of earthly joys as equally holy with the austere and sacrificial severity of the doctors and saints that disdained them ; the church that has elevated the innocence of mother and child into equality with its male divinities, has thereby surely added another universal trait to its beauty, if another infinite danger to its final victory. Perhaps it is in these angels that Correggio's creativeness becomes most truly religious ; it is he who has turned these healthy happy lads loose to romp in the kingdom of Heaven, which every man whose culture grows complete carries within him, to which he can and must resort for strength and regeneration, to which he may and will resort more and more for delight and recreation as his perfection ripens, and he becomes a better citizen both of this world and that.

## IV

It remains now briefly to notice Correggio's minor works in fresco. The most important of these is the lunette representing St. John the Evangelist and his eagle, which is preening its wings, or, as Signor Ricci suggests, is plucking forth a feather with which the saint may write the Apocalypse, having already blunted, on a less extravagant work,—the goose-quill, with which he is writing. This beautiful and refined work seems already to belong to the time of Reynolds, rather than to the Renaissance or any intervening period. The simplicity and the "good taste" of the design separate it from the world that was then,

and which, though it created this ideal of taste, presented it in general with some mediæval or at least Cinquecento strangeness still clinging to, still bound up with it. Two centuries of eclecticism and search after the grand style will be required before in a return towards that great period this note will be struck again. The colour is sober and fine as the design (*see* illustration facing p. 102).

## V

The *Coronation of the Virgin* in the apse of St. Giovanni Evangelista was destroyed in order to enlarge the choir, and replaced by a copy. Several unimportant fragments of the original exist; that containing the two principal figures is in the Library at Parma, and three angels' heads are in the collection of Dr. Ludwig Mond in London. Many copies of the groups of angel heads were made by the Carracci. The composition is represented by Cesari Aretusi's copy, now in the apse. The influence of this work has been enormous; it renewed the appeal of the angel choirs in Quattrocento and Cinquecento pictures in a larger, suaver, more capable language, though less intense, less delicate. The five cherub heads in the National Gallery by Sir Joshua Reynolds are, as it were, the last and most aerial, most bell-like echo of this genial creation. The central figures and attendant saints are, as usual, of little interest in themselves, and only just suffice to build up the general effect of a crowded corner in a heaven where the clouds have invaded a garland-wreathed garden temple, and the angels float on—and might easily be expected to fade—to cloud or re-embody out of mist. There is light and music, and a crown held above the Virgin's head.

## VI

The *Annunciation*, a lunette painted for the Church of the Annunciation in Parma about the same date probably, is now represented by certain vague stains on a piece of wall framed in the Parma Gallery. We perceive by the drawing at Wilton and by copies that we have the same idea of a cloud, of angels supporting the Messenger Gabriel, whose head is supposed to have had something of the divine fire of Raphael's angels chasing Heliodorus; but as copies are very little trustworthy on such points and the original is silent, we may listen to as little or as much of such talk as we please. It appears that this composition was effective, and all that we should expect from Correggio. Lastly there is the *Madonna della Scala* (placed over the eastern gate of the City of Parma, on the inner side, probably about 1524), of which something more than a stain on plaster exists framed in the Parma Gallery. The whole composition is possibly given by a drawing in the Weimar Gallery, and calls for no remark. This picture was very popular and was ill-treated in consequence, being studded over with votive offerings, for each of which a hole was drilled into it, as also in order to fix silver crowns over the two heads. Thode has compared this picture to Raphael's Madonnas—and Raphael's Madonnas have a reputation almost as legendary in its character; in this lies, I fancy, the precision of the comparison, all that is not accounted for by common traditions, identity of period, and that vague commerce of the art world, which, without doubt, could not leave Correggio in entire ignorance of such a reputation as Raphael's.

## VII

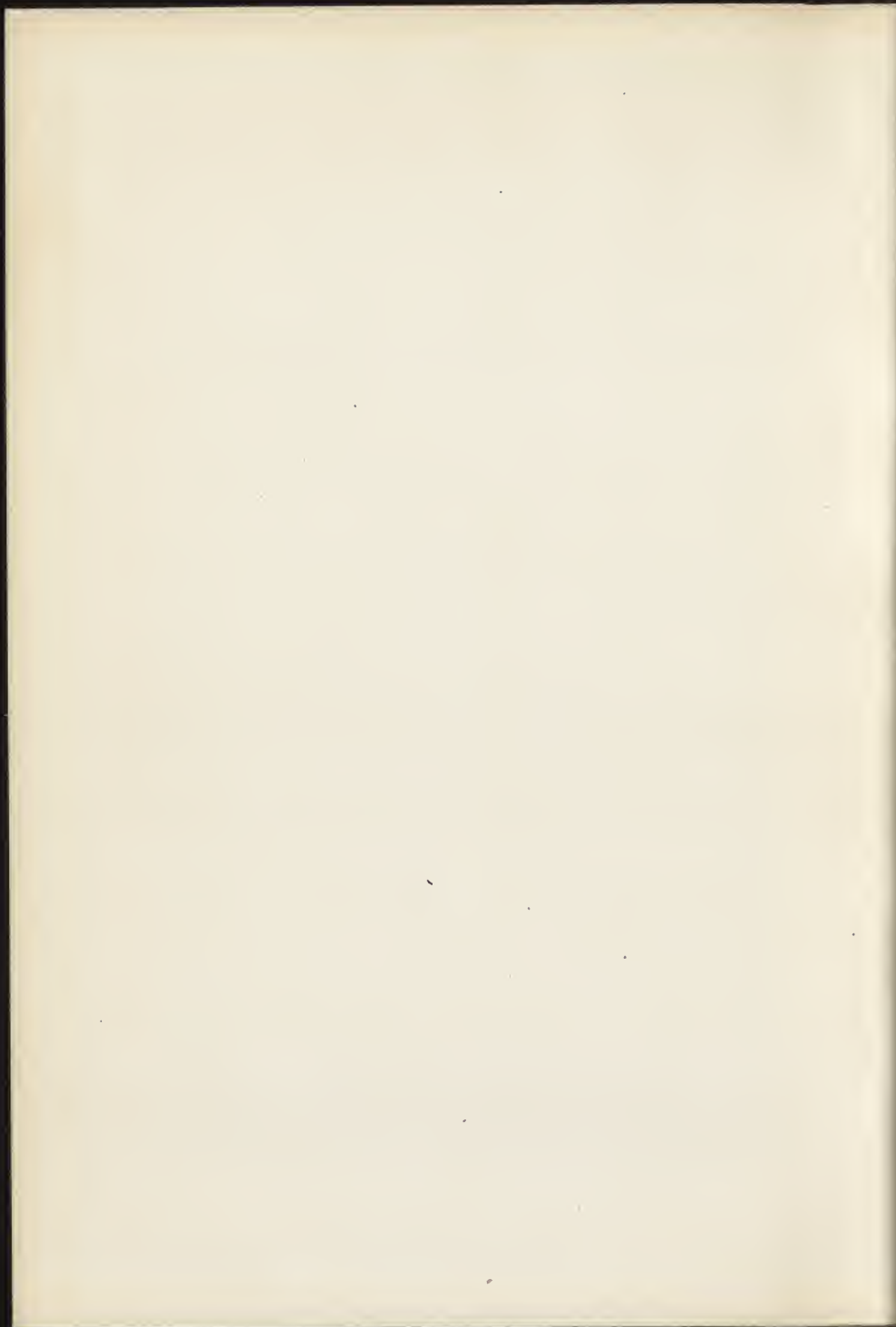
There is no instance, as far as I am aware, in Correggio's work, of a figure borrowed either in idea or in fact from a known figure of Sarto or of Raphael, or of Michael Angelo; but if I read the character of his genius aright, this fact would only be what we should expect, even supposing him to have had a very considerable knowledge of their productions. The resemblance between his St. George in the 1530 altar-piece named after that saint and Sarto's St. Michael in the *Four Saints* (1528) is provoking: the dates almost preclude direct influence, and all that can be said is that the differences between these two parallel figures are very typical of the differences that exist between the two artists in their use of models and poses, while the coincidence of their resemblance is difficult to explain (*see pp. 73 to 78*). The parallels drawn between figures in the dome of St. Giovanni Evangelista and in Raphael's *Disputa* are such as no artist, no creator would dream of insisting on in this sense, any more than on that between the *Madonna della Scala* and Raphael's Madonnas. The angel in the right-hand top corner of the *Martyrdom of Saints Placidus and Flavia*, and the angel on the left of Raphael's Sibyls in the Pace at Rome, present affinities such as might be explained by a common ancestor, or by direct intercourse, according to the bias of the interested party; but which in themselves are at least very dubious, even if they be more plausible than some other fancied resemblances. The one figure might have developed from the other by the process described in Part II, ch. ii. (page 35); but the position of the feet is reversed in perspective, while that of the arms is not, an unreasonable change. Still the figures



*Hanfstaengl*

THE MADONNA AND ST. SEBASTIAN, 1525  
DRESDEN GALLERY

*Face p. 122*





are certainly similar in idea and to a certain extent in arabesque. On the other hand, Signor Ricci has not proved the impossibility of a visit to Rome; his series of dates is far from complete enough for that, and leaves several gaps of months together, during which such a journey might have been prosecuted. Mengs lays stress on another influence emanating from Rome, that of the fresco, once in the Santi Apostoli, by Melozzo da Forli. The figure of the ascending Christ may well have given Correggio the idea of his ascending Virgin in the Cathedral, and the background of angels and the whole sense of the ascending swirl may have been thus derived. The fragments of Melozzo's fresco suggest as much; and it is noteworthy that there is a strange modernness of accent about many of his angelic figures which may have attracted Correggio to him, as his own modernness attracted the eighteenth century and still attracts to-day. Correggio's use of such suggestions would be parallel to that of those he drew from Mantegna's works, and almost as obvious. If, so late as the circle of genii in the Cathedral, he remembers the boys lighting torches on the elephants in Mantegna's *Triumph of Cæsar*, as Signor Ricci insists, we have well-nigh as good reason to insist on the resemblance between the Virgin ascending above and Melozzo's Christ. It seems to me far more reasonable to imagine that Correggio was influenced by the large style and bold invention of works at Rome and Florence; but whether directly through his own eyes, or indirectly through the drawings and descriptions of travelling artists, I have no desire to insist. To suppose that there was no such influence would, it appears to me, create an anomaly in æsthetic history. Correggio's originality would then be out of all proportion

greater than either Michael Angelo's or Raphael's or that of any other known artist whatsoever, yet he would remain their inferior in excellence: Michael Angelo's obviously, Raphael's on certain points. He is in every case more ingenious, more plausible in invention; a freer, a more modern, if a more trifling spirit.

PART IV

RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS





*Atinari*

DEPOSITION. PARMA GALLERY

*Face p. 126*



## CHAPTER I

### A HALT AND TWO PICTURES

#### I

HERE, "to interpose a little ease," as Milton says, "let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise." In fact, when one comes to consider closely, our frail thoughts have little else than surmises to occupy them at all. The modern surmise of the extreme complexity of the universe ought soon to become a standing reproof of the supposition that the language of assurance can have any but a rhetorical justification.

Language, regarded as a practical engine and not as a natural product of life, is so simple and limited when compared with any object of contemplation, that the notion of absolute exactness and precision in description ought soon, one would imagine, to fade away for all save the very near-sighted, the range of whose perceptions has already been so simplified by disease as perhaps to establish for them some sort of proportion between the capacity of the means of expression and the object of contemplation. All except those who are penned in the prison of some narrow optical or spiritual delusion we perhaps should expect, at no very distant date, to revert to that older conception of the nature of language which gave us poetry, which relied on

inspiration and intuition to produce the inexplicable felicities of discourse.

In speaking as in painting, great and worshipful results are only to be obtained by those who apprehend more than they say, and who, being their own best hearers, are taught by their own words how to proceed. If they captivate, excite, and inspire themselves, there is some chance that, having aroused their own active attention and collaboration, they may meet with the succour of that of others.

## II

In painting, this active collaboration of the incomplete result with the painter has three fields in which to exercise itself. A picture may be alive after three large manners; that is, it may act on us, influence or stimulate us in three ways, either simultaneously or separately. Now living painting is painting which taught the painter how to complete itself. Painting that was a foregone conclusion when the canvas was clean is dead painting. To know perfectly how to paint anything is to paint in an uninteresting and uninspiring manner; it is deadening.

Method is essential, especially for a complex result: but an adequate method is one that has overshot the mark; it is so because the communion between the artist and his material has ceased. He has relegated it to a position of servitude; and in revenge it sulks and tells him nothing new. He loses his interest in a relationship of which he supposes himself to have exhausted the fertility.

It is the same thing in regard to the object he is rendering when he thinks he has no need to examine it any more, that he knows all or quite enough about it: it acts



on him as if it were offended, and, instead of attracting, eludes him.

The third relation in which this little drama of the growth and cooling of friendship takes place is in the relation of the artist to his public. The most representative member of his public is of course himself; the only member at least who has much chance of making him understand what is wanting. As a mind apprehensive of the result of his labours, the artist is differently constituted to what he was while at work or before the work began. According to the elasticity of his nature he will now be able to separate himself from his sometime selves. Yet this final self was growing up, as it were, all through the process.

People wonder that the creative artist should have so little need of society, and should at the same time often divine the constitution of the world before he has had it drummed into him by painful experience. The explanation is that the creative act implies the prosecution of these three delicate intrigues, courtships, friendships, or whatever you may call them, which are also often complicated and involved to an endless degree by the artist's other passions and material interests.

The mere connoisseur or lover of pictures can never too much insist on having a living and intimate relation to the pictures he looks at. Pictures that do not rouse him to this he had better let alone; and in those he studies, a clear conception of these three main relationships, success or failure in which went to produce them, will be of more use to him than all the book lore or technical knowledge that he could acquire in a lifetime. They alone will help him to sympathise with the life of a picture,

and to have a living relation to it. This is why art criticism has been so barren of real success; because to describe human life exact methods and mechanical or systematic aids are always inadequate; the task really demands the creative power itself, and artists have had something better on which to expend it. Painters have not often had the necessary command over written language, had they been willing to lend their leisure to this task.

### III

The ideas at which we have glanced may be applied to the examination of any picture. The word "mastery" is always luring people to forget that man must be a discoverer and learner to the end of his life, in such a complex universe as that which surrounds us. In studying Correggio's pictures we shall do well to ask what he was learning, first from his relation to the materials in which he worked, secondly in relation to his subject, thirdly in relation to those whom he addresses; whether he was developing his intimacy in all three cases, or whether he would seem to have cooled and been estranged from his subject, his material, or his public, as the case may be.

No doubt, our answers to these questions will not be capable of adequate formulation; words will fail us. Yet to embody an impression in a fiction may help to strengthen and clarify it. We must remember that impressions of concrete objects are spiritual, and still demand the envelope of a myth if they are to be dealt with in their actual complexity and indefiniteness. Yes, they are living, spiritual or real—according to the vocabulary we employ,—not abstract or formal; they, like the beauty of a work of art,



MADONNA DEL LATTE. BUDA PESTH GALLERY

*Face p. 130*



like the greatness of a character, must be felt as Mommsen felt the perfection of Cæsar, or as Matthew Arnold felt that of Jesus, with joy and power ; not calculated as we calculate the cubic capacity of a ship's hull, or summed up like our expenditure. It is a fatigue, a despair, which tempts us to treat them thus. We feel that sunshine and the wind are more to us than any science can express : but so is every other object the least and the greatest. The demand on our receptive and responsive power is continuous and infinite. We tire and put off life. Abstractions are counters for the convenience of our exhaustion, they represent impressions as numbers represent persons in an election—persons whom we might know or even love, but can only count.

Masterpieces and great men are unknowable, both by reason of the conditions of their production at a distance from us, and by the complexity of their nature and their relations to a still more complex universe. We must be content to know in part, and feel more than we can express in words—as more is expressed by a glance, a silence, or a gesture, than speech could compass.

Yes, masterpieces and great men are like God, not only because the difficulty of knowing them is infinitely greater than that which is already too great for us—the difficulty of knowing ourselves and our neighbours—but because they are divine, and respond to us in proportion to our living interest, love, and devotion. Those who fasten wholeheartedly on them receive some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some an hundred-fold.

#### IV

And now having interposed a little ease, and re-invigorated our minds with their most wholesome and

necessary food, general or religious ideas ;—that is, ideas about that which moulds and shapes our lives, rough-hew them as we may ;—having cleaned and refreshed our palates with a mouthful of wheaten bread, let us return to these wonderful sweetmeats and delicacies of Correggio's confection, and compare two pictures similar in subject, diverse in date.

The *Repose in Egypt* (see illustration facing p. 70) has, compared with the work that preceded it, a broader and graver beauty. The arabesque is at once more original and more classical. The painting and colour are larger and simpler. It evidently represents a stride forward for the young master. There is something about it which might suggest the influence of Leonardo. On the evidence of Correggio's drawings we may conclude this influence had reached him through Cesare da Sesto ; Leonardo himself had passed through Parma. But the affinity which we feel need not suggest a closer contact : besides, something may be due to the fact that Correggio, two or three years before his marriage, was in love, or at least filled with a new exhilaration in regard to female beauty, an impulse to exalt and worship it with something of awe. The arabesque and light and shade pattern express this more fully and with more felicity than the actual figures and poses. His Virgins had hitherto been expressionless, stolid rather than grave, or with a difficult smile, as in the *St. Francis*. However, the Madonna of the little Brera *Adoration of the Kings* had struck a new note of peculiar refinement, both as to sentiment and in arabesque. Now there is added to this, gravity, dignity, and a sense of mystery. Even the two unnecessary Saints have more propriety than usual ; while the background of trees, always delightful in

Correggio as in Titian, though in quite a different way, is beautifully attuned.

Perhaps, in regard to colour, the effort to strike a new accord in harmony with his new intentions has betrayed itself in some unpleasant hotness, some failure in transparency and vibration. The picture disappoints those who have known a photograph first. Signor Ricci has developed this into an indication that Correggio was passing through the storm and stress period necessary to the German-made psychology of great men, who must all follow the conventional abstract of Goethe's career. He has certainly failed to do justice to this beautiful work, which lives as the record of a great advance, and of some months of eager absorption and victory on the part of the young master. If we allow that certain aspects of the work are not entirely free, it is the most that a generous criticism can admit in limitation of the praise and pleasure that this successful work should inspire.

## V

In the *Return from Egypt*, or the *Madonna della Scodella*, as it is called, all is vivacious, fluent, and gay. The scene itself is more literally illustrated and more amply motived than in the earlier picture (see illustration facing p. 198).

This work illustrates the contrast between Correggio and Sarto in its most marked degree. Sarto is haunted by the monumental when treating such subjects; he never forgets Michael Angelo, but he visibly yawns on his self-imposed pedestal. Correggio, on the other hand, frankly evades the demand for monumental dignity and import with a theatrical counterfeit; into which,

however, he is, in lucky instances such as this picture, able to enter with all his nimble amenity and captivating sprightliness, until he makes these draperies that are not clothes, and all the stagey smartness of the get-up, lend themselves to a new and delightfully lyrical poetry ;—which, like the false pastorals of polite periods, is capable of conveying even intimate beauties.

The incident comes from an apocryphal Gospel. A palm tree stoops down to offer its fruits to the holy travellers, and a rock is riven by the earth's anxiety that her pent-up stores may gush forth to slake their thirst. With one hand St. Joseph receives the fruit from the angelic agents, who compel the courtesy of the soulless palm ; with the other, transfers it to the hand of the child. The Virgin scoops up the water in the "scodella," or little cup ; her other hand holds back the drapery from her wrist, for fear it should dip in the water or be splashed. Her little son catches at her wrist, impatient for the draught ; she, turning, smiles on his eagerness. A child-angel plays the part of nymph of the source, while one somewhat older tethers the donkey in the background.

The conception is in every sense more inventive and less conventional than that of the early picture ; but conventionality appears now where it was then absent—in the flamboyant draperies which bear but an apologetic resemblance to possible garments ; in the overwrought alertness of the faces, even of St. Joseph's ; and were these characteristics absent or comparatively sobered, as they are in the contemporary *Notte*, the topsy-turvy poses and extravagant foreshortening of the angels would clearly declare the lateness of its date. Yet, in spite of these airs and graces, it is far from being a mere academical





*Alinari*

MARTYRDOM OF SS. PLACIDUS AND FLAVIA. PARMA GALLERY

*Face p 134*



*tour de force* like the *Madonna and St. George* (see p. 83). The invention lives and is lyrical, like a scene in an opera by Mozart.

Once, doubtless, the painting was a ravishment from end to end, but the centre has been over-cleaned, and become comparatively crude and empty. Round the edges we find portions whose lustre has suffered less; the hand that holds the silver cup, the faces of the angels above St. Joseph, and the angel that ties the donkey—no words can convey the beauty of these delightful motives, as they are rendered by the brilliancy, freshness and sweetness of brushwork and colour. There is a difference of more than a century between the grave dignity of the earlier masterpiece and the cheerful, piquant and, as it were, polite and polished address of this latter.

## VI

Correggio has travelled in twelve years from the social and intellectual atmosphere of the contemporaries of Leonardo and Mantegna to that in which Beaumarchais and Mozart were brought up. He first, and alone, came there where the refinement and taste of aristocracies, encumbered by their corruption, would arrive only two centuries later. It is not improbable that as a man he was silent and reserved; and not a little of the new social atmosphere suggested by this picture was probably developed in intimate *tête-à-tête* with his own quick and responsive work from the hints gleaned by his ever-observant eyes. If such a society at all existed around him, we have at least no other contemporary record of it. When such refinement was realised in the world, there were

no longer on the continent artists capable of expressing it with the breadth and the power that was Correggio's.

Viewed as workmanship, this picture and those of the same period have never been rivalled by another human hand. They have something in common with the most brilliant of modern experimentalists, and at the same time appear as the natural flower of the comprehensive traditions of Renaissance painting. Baroccio, Correggio's most brilliant imitator, is unable to rival him; and Paul Baudry, his most gifted modern follower, failed, owing to an alien technical training, to unravel the mystery of his methods,—though perhaps this great, if at present forgotten, master was equally endowed by nature to invent and capture beauty by sleight of hand.

## VII

Now we must return to the consideration of two other pictures, painted at the same time as the Uffizi *Reposo*, and akin to it in mood and conception. One is unfortunately only known to us by inadequate copies: the *Albinea Madonna* was perhaps even more beautiful than the *Reposo*; the arabesque of the Virgin and Child would seem to indicate a yet finer invention in what, for lack of a better term, we may call Leonardesque elegance (see p. 74). The landscape also is grander in scope and more important in intention, and must have been a treasure to dream of.

In the most perfect of this group of pictures Correggio finds himself, and puts aside conventional expectations as happily as and more thoroughly than Titian does in the *Vierge au Lapin*. In the *Zingarella* the

unnecessary saints are gone. There is nothing to suggest that this is more or other than a lovely mother, save a clot of child-angels, clinging to a palm-bough in the dimness overhead—and perhaps this picture would be still more convincing were these airy beings replaced by a pattern of large leaves. They are painted in green monochrome, as the little puff of angels in the Brera *Adoration of the Magi* are in violet smoke colour; this grisaille treatment might possibly be traced back through red, purple and green cherub heads to some primitive symbols for spirit life. Correggio adopts it as a means of maintaining a due distinctness or proportion of interest between two or more parts of a subject. It was suggested to him probably in part by the reliefs and cameos often used in his forerunner's pictures and continued in his own, till in the lunettes for the Camera di San Paolo this treatment finds its perfect use. There is possibly also in these strange bronze-green cherubs the effect of a process, which included painting a picture all but entirely in monochrome before it was coloured by glazes. Perchance now and again the young master, alert and watching his work's growth with the eye of a learner, perceived that his picture was practically complete, its beauty already beyond his power to improve, before the regulation process had been carried out to its foregone conclusion. At least, in such a wakeful moment, he may have resolved to finish in some other way, by merely deepening or mellowing the green monochrome already there.

All of these several possibilities may have been at work to produce a result which appears a little freakish to us nowadays; after all we must be content not to know many things, if we are to get the full benefit of what

we do know, however much less than what we might like to know it may be. And to maintain an atmosphere of liquid suggestion around the many unrelated facts which we cannot help observing, is a likely way to prepare for their due relation by others more fortunate than ourselves.



*Giani*

YOUNG MAN FLEEING FROM THE CAPTORS OF CHRIST  
COPY AFTER A LOST PICTURE. PARMA

*Face p. 138*





## CHAPTER II

### CANDLE-LIGHT AND TRAGEDY

#### I

REYNOLDS, dwelling on the advantages which Gainsborough reaped from painting of an evening by candle-light, had before pointed out that this unusual assiduity in pursuing his craft doubtless aided an artist's development in it, by keeping its niceties still before the mind in hours of recreation. As children, caught by the desire of excelling in some display of skill, amuse themselves in their play-time with the very objects that are the attributes of their drudgery to others, be it with mapping-pen and ruler, or with summing upon an abacus ;—so, he had said, " Philopoemen " in his leisure " in an occasional journey " formed his mind from his earliest years by considering and discussing the possibilities presented by localities and imaginary troops for victory or defeat, and in the same way we know Rossetti played at writing sonnets with his brother and friends.

Having noted this, Reynolds goes on to remark of painting by candle-light ;

I am, indeed, much inclined to believe that it is a practice very advantageous and improving to an artist ; for by this means he will acquire a new and a higher perception of what

is great and beautiful in nature. By candlelight not only objects appear more beautiful, but, from their being in a greater breadth of light and shadow, as well as having a greater breadth and uniformity of colour, nature appears in a higher style; and even the flesh seems to take a higher and richer tone of colour. Judgment is to direct us in the use to be made of this method of study; but the method itself is, I am very sure, advantageous. I have often imagined that the two great colourists, Titian and Correggio, though I do not know that they painted by night, formed their high ideas of colouring from the effects of objects by this artificial light. . . .

This extremely significant passage is not only a wholesome antidote to the many mouths who to-day proclaim that to paint things as they are is the highest reach of art, but it shows us how a great creator of things as they might or should be, questioned the works of his predecessors to learn how they obtained their effects, from what suggestions they developed them. Reynolds (whose work is certainly more comparable to theirs both in kind and quality than that of the common-day painters who profess to be the merest looking-glasses held up to nature) never dreamed but that Titian and Correggio might very well have transferred under a blue sky and into the sunlight, effects studied by night with a candle, in order to create "the light that never was on land or sea." He speaks in another place of

the vulgar and ignorant, who feel the highest satisfaction in seeing a figure which, as they say, looks as if they could walk round it; but however low I may rate this pleasure of deception, I should not oppose it, did it not oppose itself to a quality of a much higher kind, by counteracting entirely that fulness of manner which is so difficult to express in words, but which is found in perfection in the best works of Correggio, and, we

may add, of Rembrandt. This effect is produced by melting and losing the shadows in a ground still darker than those shadows.

He points out that painters who lay stress on "relief" fall into a "dryness of style"; and continues: "As those two qualities, relief and fulness of effect, can hardly exist together, it is not very difficult to determine to which we ought to give preference."

## II

Some will feel that this phrase "fulness of effect" leaves much to be desired; it is scarcely explicit. I will venture to translate it. The satisfaction of the eye of one who loves beauty, in regard to light and shade, is, I imagine, what Reynolds meant by fulness of effect. He was right. This, though it may be expressed in words, can never be illustrated in words; and without illustration, the expression, even if correct, is liable to be wrongly applied, wrongly illustrated by other minds. So I will go on to apply this idea to actual works by Correggio, of which there are three that furnish more particular evidence that Reynolds' guess about his study of candle-light effects was probably correct, and which may also help us to distinguish what he meant by fulness of effect.

In the famous Nativity called *La Notte* (see illustration facing p. 174), every one will recognise a candle or lamp-light effect, painted with one ingenious omission, namely that of the candle or lamp. This omission was intended to make the light seem supernatural. The picture is usually described as though the Holy Child were the source of

light : but this is not true, as any one who considers what a luminary capable of casting so strong a light on surrounding objects, and in the form of a baby, would look like. No, the child is only the object nearest to where the candle must have been ; its light falling on him models him like the other objects. This device is of a piece with that great inventiveness and ingenuity which we have so often had occasion to remark in Correggio's work ; and I should like to suggest that he hit upon it in striving to cope with a subject really beyond him, rather than when planning *La Notte*, a subject with which he was amply capable of coping. The *Agony in the Garden*, at Apsley House, has the same effect of light radiating from a source which ought by rights to be within the field of vision represented, but which is omitted. Both these pictures in the lighting and general composition remind one of Rembrandt, who made similar attempts to represent a supernatural light. However, he never seems to have quite abandoned the idea of suggesting that some object between the source of light and the eye actually hid the candle. Perhaps in etchings he has, but the light and shade then is so thoroughly arbitrary as to make them doubtful illustrations. His *Adoration of the Shepherds*, in the National Gallery, may very well be compared to *La Notte* : the subject is the same, but all the rest is how different ! The gestures and expressions of Correggio's figures are obvious in intention, they illustrate the legend from what may be called its own point of view ; at any rate from the point of view of its general acceptance and supposed significance. He is strikingly more simple and direct in his conception of the scene than in the almost contemporaneous *Return from*



*Anderson*

GENERAL VIEW UP INTO CATHEDRAL DOME, PARMA

*Face p. 142*



*Egypt.* His peasants are almost as definitely Italians as those of Rembrandt are Dutch; in spite of certain ambiguous resemblances to classical or conventional draperies, even their costumes are almost possible. But the expressions on the faces in Rembrandt's little masterpiece are all individual and accidental, not typical or classical; they represent subtle yet supremely likely deviations from the expressions supposed by the accepted point of view. That is to say, their highly probable unconsciousness of the significance that the scene would assume for Christendom is insisted on and underlined; and by this appeal to our imaginative sympathy Rembrandt touches home in a way Correggio never succeeds in doing, but which is more on a level with the success of his *Io* than with that of any of his religious pictures. Rembrandt's technical superiority is of the same kind, his painting is inimitable, a miracle—so delicate, so harmonious, so varied! Correggio's picture was not even intended to succeed in the same way. It was designed to enhance things already beautiful, not to discover and reveal the beauty of common things and things disdained. Correggio's staging is more ingenious than Rembrandt's even, and certainly better adapted to render effective forms and colours beautiful in themselves: but he fails to give a vivid sympathy with the psychical drama supposed. Rather he makes us feel that his expression of this is plausible, external and shallow, and that its success can only be with people who are incapable of appreciating his very best.

## III

It is to be remarked that since the times when artists were bound to furnish an *Agony in the Garden* as one of a series demanded from them by tradition, Correggio alone among the very great has attempted this subject in a painting: that Rembrandt even, though he has risen to its true height, has done so in a tiny etching, where many difficulties are obviated by the restricted dimensions. Correggio's treatment betrays the immodesty of indifference: he never intended to satisfy more than the most conventional demands (*see* illustration facing p. 170). The subject did not grip him; he has grasped it with callous ingenuity and superficial loquacity. Though vastly superior to the National Gallery version, the picture at Apsley House is not even as painting wholly satisfactory; it has a similar meretricious mastery to that shown in the composition, in which the difficult problems of colour and light are solved with the adroitness of a conjurer. Probably he himself, though proud of this little *tour de force*, was not pleased with it; and in *La Notte* determined to do as clever a thing more happily. His ingenuity being chiefly concentrated on the problems of light and colour, he is content with simpler poses, more homely draperies, and faces of less sought-for beauty. This comparative simplicity is extremely noteworthy in a period when operatic draperies and poses were the rule with him in such subjects. However, were other evidence wanting, the elaborate foreshortening and the poses of the angel choir above would suffice to date this picture.



## IV

Contemporary documents give us a hint of the actual difficulties which may have surrounded the birth of *La Notte*, and may explain why the poses and general conception are simpler than the lateness of its date would have led us to expect. A full-size cartoon would seem to have been prepared for it as early as 1522, and the artist to have bound himself not to depart from that design,—an exceedingly irksome condition to an artist of Correggio's temperament.

Be it known to all that I, Alberto Pratenero, by these words written with my own hand, promise to give to Master Antonio of Correggio, painter, two hundred and eight pounds of the old Reggian currency, and this in payment of a picture which he promises to paint for me with his utmost skill, wherein he is to represent the Nativity of our Lord, with such figures as pertain to the subject, according to the *size and measurements of the drawing*, by his own hand submitted to me, by the said Master Antonio at Reggio, on the 14th day of October, MDXXII. On the day aforesaid I handed over to him forty pounds of the ancient currency, in part payment.

And I, Antonio Lieto of Correggio, declare that I received the sum mentioned on the day and in the year aforesaid, in token of which I have written this with my own hand.

The picture, however, was not completed and placed over the altar until eight years later, in 1530, as we learn from the inscription by "Albertus et Gabriel Pratenerii, hæc de Hieronymi parentis optimi sententia fieri voluerunt ann MDXXX."

This is affixed to a pilaster to the right of the Prateneri Chapel in San Prospero at Reggio.

When such conditions as the one italicised entered into Correggio's commissions, we can well understand why an artist, so given to developing his work with rapidity, boldness, and thoroughness, as it were by leaps, might let eight years pass before completing what he was no longer free to transform.

## V

The little Madonna kneeling in delighted adoration before her new-born son, in the Uffizi, was probably painted while the *Notte* was in hand. Charmingly conceived and put together, its execution is over smooth and its colour a little cheap. It may probably have flowered out of the experience accumulated in study for *La Notte*, to please somebody else rather than the artist himself,—somebody whose taste in colour was known to be no better than it was. It may have even amused a man so ingeniously resourceful as we must conceive Correggio to have been, when treating subjects of which he was already rather weary, thus to hit the nail on the head for—a patron? a mistress? a wife? Who knows?

## VI

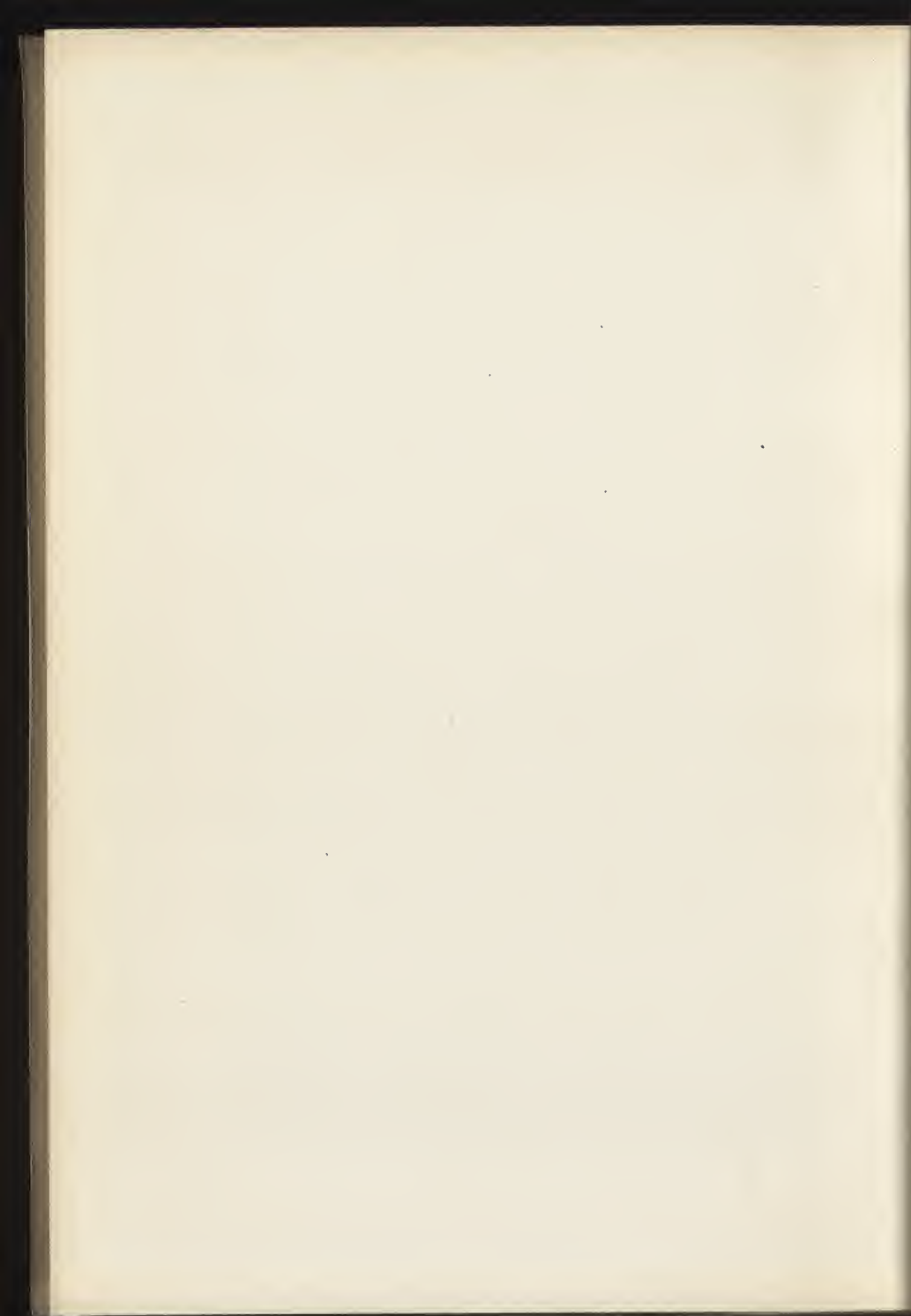
The third and most beautiful picture which I take to illustrate what Reynolds says about candle-light, was painted earlier than those we have already examined, being of about the same date as the *Madonna and St. Sebastian*, 1525. It is the famous picture in the Prado representing the apparition of Christ to the Magdalen. The figure of Christ was evidently painted by a light



*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME

*Face p. 146*



whose source was not far distant from the lower of his hands; and though probably the same light was used in painting the study for the Magdalen, the relation between the two figures has been changed in the picture. For, distinctly above Christ's hand, that light can scarcely have been so far above it as the light that falls on the Magdalen's head would suggest, nor so far in front of it as the light on her hand and shoulder indicate. No doubt Correggio has tampered with some of the strong candle-cast shadows; yet it is obvious that the light is thrown up on Christ's face and torso as no radiance from any distant dawn would ever throw it, while the cast shadows up and down the figure sufficiently indicate the actual position of its source (*see* illustration facing p. 118).

It is a plausible suggestion that Correggio, busy all the day with the frescoes for St. Giovanni Evangelista, took to making studies from his models of an evening; when no doubt he would be quick to note, as Reynolds has done, that objects seen by candle-light not only "appear more beautiful, but, from their being in a greater breadth of light and shadow, as well as having a greater breadth and uniformity of colour, nature appears in a higher style." These studies would naturally have been from nude models; and this Christ, the St. Sebastian, and the Christ in the *Deposition* (also painted about this time) are the only grown-up nudes in Correggio's religious paintings until we come to the *Il Giorno* (finished after the Cathedral frescoes). The brocade on the Magdalen's skirt in the Madrid picture and in the *Deposition* are the same, and many other details tend to suggest the date of 1524 or 1525.

## VII

Mr. Ricketts, in his volume on the Prado, has given a description of this picture, such as he alone is able to give, who to the experience of an artist and creator adds the wide and varied familiarity with the contents of galleries and museums which is the chief strength of the connoisseur. He says :

In its original state this picture must have been one of the most fortunate and typical works by the artist. Vasari speaks of its wonderful mellowness, but unfortunately it has suffered greatly by restoration and re-painting. The over-cleaning has deprived the bright green landscape of its connecting glazes. The sky of white and mauve, whilst finely designed, is entirely modern; its clear-cut quality against the over-blue horizon and the trees leaves one in no doubt. The figures show ugly patches of restoration; the blue draperies of Christ and the tree-trunk behind the arm display also a harsh colour and spongy texture in the paint which point to re-painting. We must in imagination envelop the picture in greater mystery, give the colours a more broken quality, more depth also and more reticence, to realise how exquisite this painting must have been, which still fascinates us in spite of its rather harsh appearance and eighteenth-century scale of colour. Harsh in colour, in pigment too soft, such is its condition. We can praise the feather-like trees, the depth of the woodland, from which emerges the hill against the sky. The figures are conceived in a mood of self-absorption, as if fascinated by their emotions, though perfectly related to each other by gesture and pose—the moment has been caught; we imagine the few words spoken, and the apparition that moves so softly will soon have gone, leaving the Magdalene still kneeling in the moss of this enchanted place.

The size, subject and success of Titian's *Noli Me Tangere* in the National Gallery bring it so close to this Madrid masterpiece that a comparison of the two seems almost inevitable. Correggio's work has suffered badly from repainting. Titian's, on the other hand, in nearly perfect preservation, has something of the nature of a sketch when compared with the elaboration and fineness of Allegri's masterpiece. In both the Christ is at bottom an operatic figure, but with that charm which such fulsome gesticulation may really have in the young; its emphasis is joined to a freshness and elasticity which make it delightful. If anything, Correggio must be allowed to have rendered, in spite of this externality, a more humane depth of emotion. Both the Magdalens are more directly and genuinely explicit; but here too Correggio's is probably more touching and appropriate from an emotional standpoint. Titian, however, must bear the palm if we consider the beauty of the arabesque and of the very substance that conveys colour and form. In conception Correggio's landscape seems to me the grander, the one that may best be charged with the glamour of the scene. It is a genuine dawn that all those trees are sensitive to; that distant hill seems really to have waited the night through for the glimmer of a new day. But Titian, though the elements of his landscape are less appropriate in themselves—though they are such as he had before used with more purpose—must be allowed to have employed poorer elements in a more masterly fashion. The forms and the tints are more consciously, more felicitously chosen, as lending themselves to just that treatment rather than any other—to the touches of the actual brush and pigment employed, so that they more musically combine and blend. It was more difficult

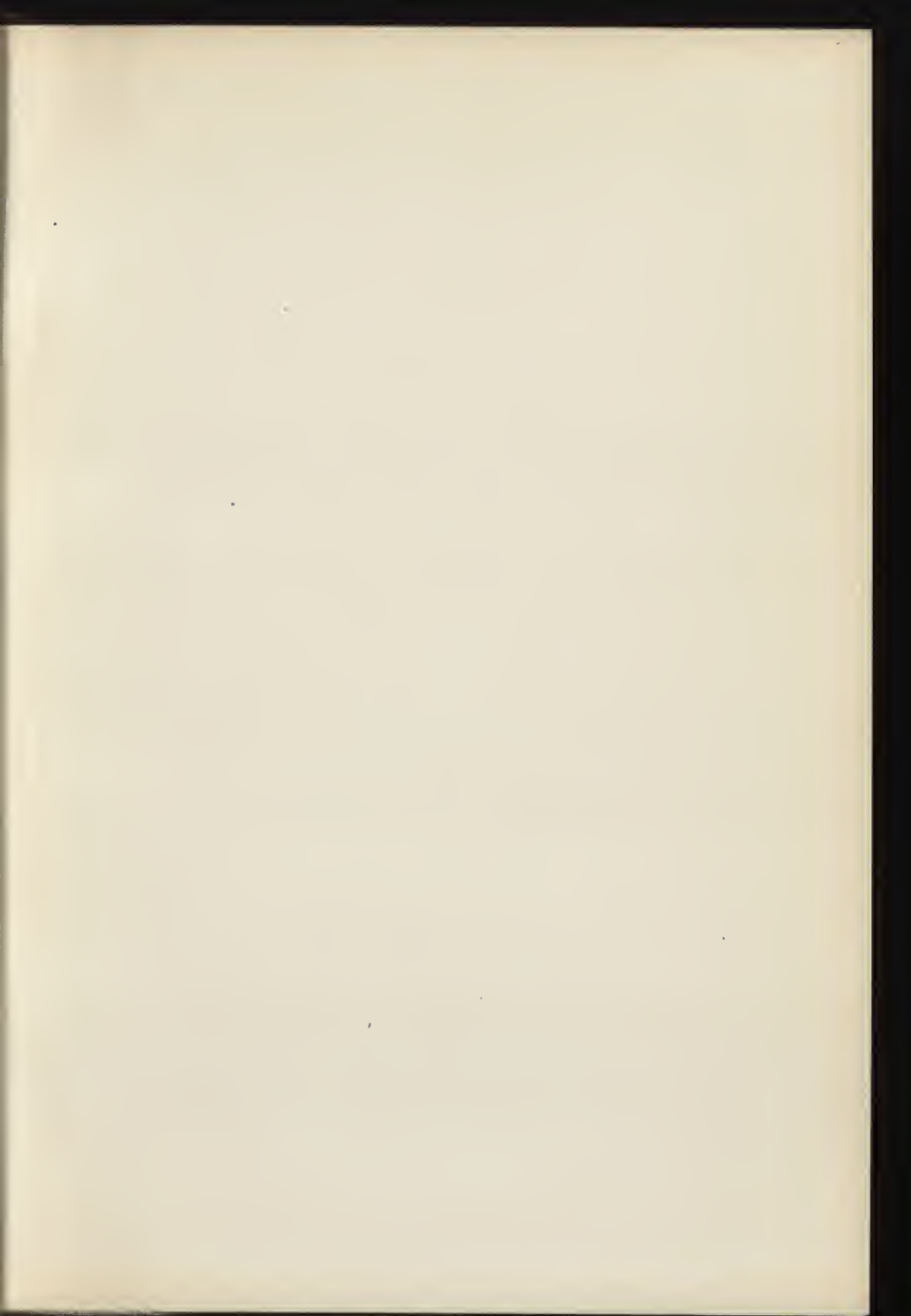
to execute Correggio's masterpiece, more difficult to conceive Titian's—to conceive, that is, as expression, not as subject to be expressed. For undoubtedly Correggio had the finer vision; but Titian had the more concise, the more developed, the more idiomatic language with which to record what he would. It is characteristic of the epoch that there is a shade of paganism in the atmosphere of both pictures, something that suggests the substitution of attributes of Bacchus for those traditionally given to Christ in that scene.

### VIII

Mommsen, the historian of Rome, treating of the character of Julius Cæsar, remarks, "The greatest men are not those who err the least." It would be a great boon if this reflection were applied to art, and written up above the desks of those who, like myself, have been set to work by the current fashion for illustrated monographs on the great masters. The greatest artists are not those who err the least, whose failings are most insignificant. Why should we so often find Correggio's treatment of dramatic or tragic subjects classed and praised with the genuine victories in this difficult field? Why imagine that one who is a great artist must necessarily show his greatness here? Correggio's circumstances, even if his own dramatic ambition had not betrayed him, were sure to thrust upon him the treatment of the tragic side of Christian story.

We have no Crucifixion by him, but we have a *Descent from the Cross*, an *Agony in the Garden*, an *Ecce Homo*, a *Martyrdom of Saints*. A master of Correggio's ability was, of course, able to illustrate these incidents adequately. There is then no question of an utter failure;







*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME

*Between pp. 150 & 151*



*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME

*Between pp. 150 & 151*



we may be sure that his pictures, even on these themes, will be plausible and effective. It is evident, however, that he never approached the success of Michael Angelo or Rembrandt in this more dramatic field, as Titian does occasionally approach. Many and many a primitive or quattrocento master comes nearer the essentials of such success than does Correggio. He was very cunning in the facial expression of emotions; and he elaborates facial expression, he proves bodily pain to us eloquently, he provides contrasts, but never does he quite succeed. The *Deposition* (see illustration facing p. 126) is ruined by repainting. Even in the *Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia* the ecstasy expressed is not like that which St. Paul saw when he beheld St. Stephen's face as it had been an angel's. No, it is an ecstasy proper to those who have been kindled by the idea of such a transformation before the martyrdom is complete; it is histrionic, as Jesuit religion always tends to become. Mr. Berenson draws a distinction between St. Flavia, which he calls one of Correggio's finest figures, and St. Placidus. To me the result of putting St. Flavia beside the *Io*, or even the *Madonna of the Return from Egypt*, is to see it hopelessly outclassed. The reason why St. Placidus is so far less satisfactory as to be almost repugnant, is that we are accustomed to allow in women the histrionic expression of emotion far more than in men. The expression of both Saints is entirely self-centred; it entirely lacks the awe that would accompany the sudden revelation of heavenly bliss, and would make either face appear as though it had been that of an angel. They are not caught away from themselves; they have brought themselves to that point by the long and careful nurture of their dispositions. It is to be noted that this martyr's

ecstasy is not found where it would have been most natural to expect it, if it were a true imagination from the bottom of human experience. It is not found on the Cross. "It is finished," "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"; even "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"—have no affinity with it. It was born of apocalyptic dreams of a long-nourished delusion, and was felt even by the contemporaries of Stephen to have nothing to do with Jesus. It was what He had won for them the right to expect. It was what made them forget the sense of His sweet sayings in the form He had given them, made them cling to the form and neglect the spirit (*see* illustration facing p. 134).

## IX

Correggio's efforts in this field are not the genuine article. How able, how prodigiously ingenious they can be, the *Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia* abundantly shows. This is great art, but not greatly employed. It is surprisingly modern both by its ingenuity and its unconcern, its lack of participation in the ideas from which its subject arose. Technically, the surface quality appears a less important element of the composition than in the *Marriage of St. Catherine* of the Louvre.

Correggio alters his method according to the size and nature of the task before him in a way less easy to account for than that of any other master. He does not seem so much controlled by successive periodic interests in various qualities, as really able to choose, with a free hand, a minute and delicate treatment for a tiny picture, or a bold and little varied treatment for a subject whose appeal is vigorous and direct—or a rich and insinuating *impasto* for one which is sensuous.

## X

The one subject of this kind which Correggio treated and which one can imagine his making a great success of, the *Young Man fleeing naked from the Captors of Christ*, survives for us unfortunately only in an untrustworthy copy (see illustration facing p. 74). It presents affinities on the one hand with the *Madonna and St. Sebastian* and with the Madrid *Noli Me Tangere*, on the other with the *Agony in the Garden*. In colour it assorts with the *Ecce Homo* of the National Gallery. The idea of a beautiful youth escaping naked out of a huge cloth, and flying from the menacing brutality of soldiers, half veiled in night, seems absolutely made for Correggio's powers; but the copy we possess makes it difficult to believe that he fully realised the opportunity, though it is impossible to assert that he did not.

Correggio has been particularly unfortunate in the pictures which have been lost or repainted. Besides the *Albinea* and *Bianconi Madonnas* and this picture—all of which may probably have been the best in their respective periods and classes—the list is a long one. We know of a triptych representing Christ naked seated on a rainbow and surrounded by a glory of angels, St. John the Baptist and St. Bartholomew. It has been suggested that the picture, probably by Annibale Carracci, in the Vatican, is a copy of the centre panel. There is no rainbow, and Christ is nude to the waist only; however, the picture looks like a copy after Correggio; the design is in all respects his. This picture and an early *Herodias receiving the Head of St. John the Baptist* are mentioned by Brunorio, and figure in an inventory drawn up in 1666.\*

\* See Ricci, p. 122.

Among the latest pictures there was a *Magdalen in the Desert*, a kneeling figure,\* which has nothing to do with the famous picture at Dresden (though that again may not improbably be a copy of a lost masterpiece by Correggio). Then we know by old engravings of two pictures representing *St. Joseph* and *St. Jerome* respectively, examples of a maturer happier manner of turning prophet and saint to account than that in the Cathedral dome.† The treatment of form would seem to suggest the very last years of Correggio's life; and these reverend personages, rolling on the ground and fore-shortened for the pleasure of it, begin to have the æsthetic interest of rococo giants and Michael-Angelesque symbolic figures. We can imagine Rubens taking delight in them, and feeling that another mind had approached mythology and turned it to account in much the same way as he did. Lastly, there are the cartoons for the *Loves of Jupiter*, which Correggio left in his studio, and which the Duke of Mantua wrote letters to obtain possession of—as it is thought in vain. If these cartoons were not designs for the *Io* and the *Antiope*, or replicas of the *Danae*, *Leda*, and *Ganymede*, which the Duke had given to Charles V., they must have been continuations of that glorious series, and for us a loss indeed.

\* See illustration facing p. 229.    † See illustration facing p. 218.





*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME

*Face p. 154*



## CHAPTER III

### MADONNAS

#### I

THE *Marriage of St. Catherine*, in the Louvre, was probably commenced about 1523, and carried out between the completion of the St. Giovanni Evangelista frescoes and the commencement of those in the Cathedral—about the same time as, though a little earlier than *Il Giorno*, with which it is nearly related, as the treatment of the landscapes is taken to indicate. However, many reasons might be urged for considering it rather to have been begun between 1521 and 1522. In composition, the *Il Giorno*, which was probably finished several years later, is far more developed; and the resemblance between the two backgrounds might be explained by supposing Correggio to have been very pleased with that in the *St. Catherine*, and to have returned to it in order to found that behind *Il Giorno* in the same key and mood. A patron's wish might suffice to lead him to do such a thing; but it is like Correggio to use something already done as material for a new achievement (*see* p. 40).

In the Louvre picture, it is certainly the landscape which is most original, most felicitous. It is as rich, as sumptuous, as divine, as Titian's best backgrounds, and

vet quite different. One may well credit it with having haunted its author. The whole picture is perhaps his most golden, that which critics have supposed other artists might envy him most (*see* illustration facing p. 110).

The suave and amiable Madonna, and the whole incident of the play marriage of her baby son with her young friend or cousin, while that sentimental lady's intended postures as St. Sebastian, the amused and ravished spectator;—this whole incident is charged with Correggio's secret for captivating Catholic women, or we might say all women who have been freed from the more aggressive Protestant prejudices. It has even been embodied in a legend as to its origin, for several early Italian critics, gradually improving on one another, stated that it was designed as a monument of the affection existing between actual friends of Correggio. The artist himself had been nursed through an illness by the original of the Virgin, and his sister was that of St. Catherine; while her following her husband to his home was symbolised by her mystical marriage. Such figments, though worthless as history, reveal an insight into the nature of the charm exerted such as might well be envied by more recent and more prudent critics.

A great many canvases, mostly of small proportions, lead up to this charming central masterpiece, or produce variations on it. To describe them all or arrange them in order of merit would be to do again what has often been done.

We may surmise that one of the most delicious works of this class has been lost: the *Bianconi Madonna* (*see* illustration facing p. 114), as it is called, exists only in an engraving. The composition and conception are full of freshness, and have a decision which, when all allowance for

the possible licences taken by the engraver has been made, must have distinguished it among Correggio's works of this class—often a little “curly,” to use an expressive term of studio slang.

## II

All these pictures treated the same theme, that of the Madonna and Child, and supplied the most constant demand on the market in Correggio's day. A comparison with one of the greatest nineteenth-century masters presents itself as furnishing many effective illustrations and contrasts.

Jean François Millet was profoundly influenced by Correggio's method of using light and shade, and by his use of pigment revealed in the Louvre pictures; he was also attracted by candle-light effects, and has left many studies and pictures of them. Besides Correggio's actual masterpieces in the Louvre, Millet, by the aid of a natural affinity, found Correggiesque elements behind many an eighteenth-century and seventeenth-century master, not only Italians like Baroccio or the Caraccis, but also more among those who had derived inspiration from the master of Parma at second-hand, or even from such a painter as Boucher. In his early works he was influenced besides by Correggio's sentiment—by the smiling faces, the silky curls, the blonde and whitish lilacs, yellows, pinks, which are habitual with him; gay, soft colours, delicious day-dreams, far removed from Millet's actual life and the sentiment of his more mature, more characteristic, works. Any one who has seen a pastel representing some childish nymphs and an old satyr will realise all that I mean, and understand that in it one has a charming develop-

ment of Correggio's qualities, and even perhaps of his excesses or weaknesses.

Millet produced such works under pressure of poverty : they were literally pot-boilers. It was in the same period that he painted many little nudes, which possess charms and qualities which later disappeared from his works, or were absorbed into his more austere mannerisms. We know how the production of these seductive little pictures was arrested by his overhearing a young man who, with his companion, was looking in at a dealer's window where one of them was exhibited, say : " Do you know who painted that ? " " Yes, a fellow called Millet, who paints nothing but naked women." All this, no doubt, and a great deal more, rises in the mind.

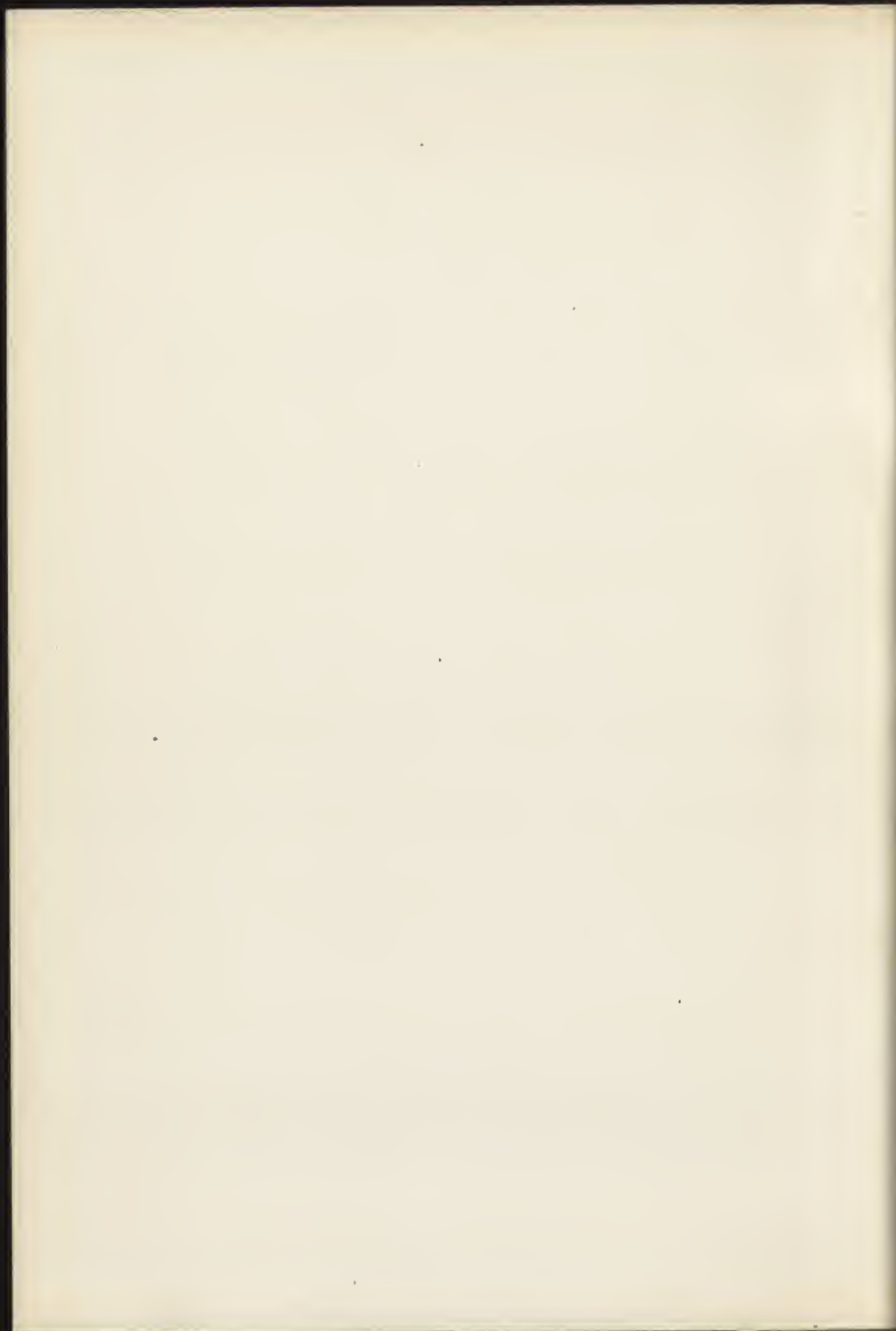
Many assume that these early works were altogether against the true bent and bias of Millet's genius, and that his later works alone express the best and truest that was in him. They deceive themselves, and unravel his character as a creator, I am persuaded, with hands too impatient or fingers too coarse to deal with the web of so fine a soul. I am convinced that Millet took up the study of peasant life, which resulted in his grand poetical works, such as *The Sower*, too dogmatically, too much after the fashion of violent sectarian conversions,—headstrong at the outset, and resulting in the growth of harsh and crude prejudices. To defend his genuine originality against the foolish bigotry of the æsthetic fashions then in vogue, he resorted to that dangerous weapon, " the impertinent logic of realism " : and as with the advance of age his genius became less a matter of spontaneous divination and preference, it succumbed to this pitiless intellectual trick which had at first only been its dog to bark at the



*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME

*Face b. 158*





enemy, but which at last dragged him, like a man who had lost his sight, towards the mud and mire of an æsthetic fashion as foolishly bigoted as that which he had once combated.

Millet was fond of treating the relation between mother and baby, which is, for him, as rigidly that of the peasant to her child as, for Correggio, it is that of the Madonna to Jesus. It is easy to take sides, and the taste of many people will place their preference wholly with the one or the other master. Reason, however, is not satisfied so easily. A painter preoccupied about technical excellence would find in both masters, amidst much similarity and kinship, matter for instruction and warning against excess. And I think the same is true when their works are considered from that more general standpoint which regards them as poems for the eye; appealing to human nature by charm of colour, charm of form, charm of surface, but also by the charm of visual associations. Millet appeals to our sense of that earthiness, that animal nearness to the dust, which gives its fascination to the old text, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." Now the force of such a statement would be lost if man were no longer regarded as having an affinity with some forfeited state of purity, felicity, and ease, or as capable of treading down his earthy nature so as to inherit some heaven giving full expression to his constrained and contaminated love of cleanliness, activity, and harmony. So that in a sense Correggio's clean babies and mothers, nice clothes, and care-warded existences must be in the mind, if we wish to feel the whole pathos of Millet's,—so patient, so docile in their harsh and straitened conditions.

And, on the other hand, Correggio's pretty pictures can

only express faith, aspiration and hope, while the actuality of some gesture copied from the real tenderness of a simple woman, the real archness of some dirty-mouthed toddler, links them to the hard and sordid maternity of men's common homes. We must confess that when planning the *Madonna and St. George*, Correggio loses much of his buoyancy and capacity of endowing with wings those upward sallies that leap a moment above the daily round, and so keep them hovering before our eyes. And we should admit also that Millet in his effort to express the terror of misery, the full tragedy of suffering maternity, by insisting without compromise on the coarseness, gloom, and oppression of some hovelhome, so as to make it typical, monumental, loses, in certain of his latest works, the power to attract, persuade and hold us in his spell; repels us, disappoints and deceives us. Instead of stirring he has oppressed the emotions to which he appealed.

Each master is sounder where he presents affinity to the other; Correggio where he is simplest, humblest (as in the little gem of our National Gallery), Millet where he is most buoyant, arch or tender.

### III

We must not conclude, however, that perfection lies between them, and that a picture showing neither bias, if in other respects equal, would be the ideal. No, this would be to commit that common error of common critics which supposes that Reynolds would be improved had he more of Gainsborough's spontaneity, Gainsborough better with more of Reynolds' balance and composure. No, this would be like desiring horses with legs as long as camels, and

quarrelling with dogs because they have not the elephant's most serviceable nose. Great masters differ from one another in kind as well as in degree of excellence, though we may suggest what we feel to be lacking to one by what is a particular excellence in another; if we insist heavily or dogmatically on such comparisons, we make them not only odious, but misleading.

We have no right to assume that all excellences can be combined, because we have no actual examples of such a perfection. The most perfect examples that we have are those which most absolutely exclude other excellences: Michael Angelo, Titian, the Greeks, are in mutual contradiction one with another. Breadth can only be obtained by a sacrifice of *nuances*, force by that of rich and delicate ornaments, integrity of effect by that of racy particularity.

The most that can be said is that the giant qualities, when present in their intensity, appeal so directly to our most permanent moods that they put minor excellences out of mind; so that only the fidgety crank who is never wholly at one with himself can remain conscious of them. "The little elegances of art, in the presence of these great ideas, thus greatly expressed, lose all their value, and are, for the instant at least, felt to be unworthy of our notice: the correct judgment, the purity of taste, which characterise Raffaele, the exquisite grace of Correggio and Parmegiano, all disappear before them," as Reynolds says.

In those early pictures of his, Millet had absorbed with a natural appetite much of that exquisite grace of Correggio, and with more energy and freshness than Parmigianino had done; and we feel this grace, this native suavity, both in the management of light and shade, and

in the rhythm of pose and arabesque, like a music, persisting through all his best poems on peasant labour and repose. That dewy laughing rustic sensuousness which he first displayed, gives a zest and a piquancy to his later and more sober treatment of maternal joys and fears, and touching ministries.

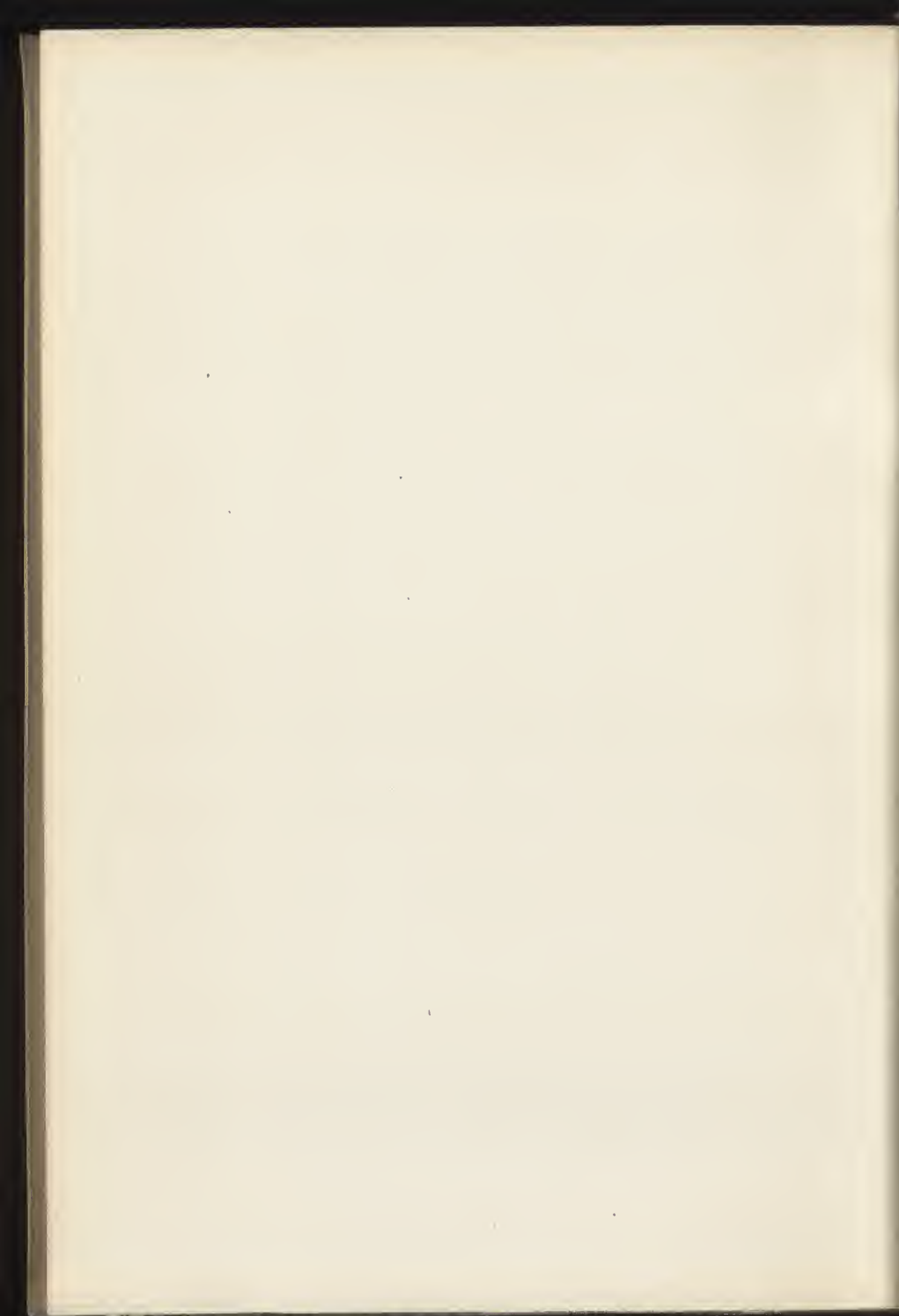
Words are of little use: in reproductions the pictures of the two masters should be placed side by side, and contemplated together. Doubtless Millet's technical resources will then be perceived to be more limited than Correggio's, and his ingenuity in composition and invention less; but at the same time he will be found to have something of the high seriousness and intensity of Michael Angelo, a little of which would have wrought as complete a transformation in Correggio's operatic Fathers and Prophets and Apostles—that capacity to suffer which ennobles, of which I have already spoken. He has sympathy with men and with old age; his felicities are not confined to the sunshine, to the blisses of young mothers, to the romps of children and the playfulness of youth. On the other hand, Correggio has a tact and amenity which could never have been entangled by a doctrinaire pose, as Millet was in spite of the innate reverence of his nature, in spite of his love of beauty, in spite of his perception of the greatness of Michael Angelo, in spite of his sensuous relish for grace and youth and sexual charm. Lured on by the confusion of the word *natural*, as expressing what is in profound conformity with human demands, with its use as expressing man's most primitive relations to the material world, he came to regard those cramping relations as ideal, and forgot that all civilisation, all morality, all intelligence was a triumph over them. At last he almost imagined



*Anderson*

DETAIL FROM CATHEDRAL DOME. ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

*Face p. 162*



that fidelity to their accidental aspects should be the chief merit of an art that must have henceforth been forbidden to create, forbidden to express aspiration, hope, and the dream-saturated object of desire. Whereas Correggio, a much less reverent nature, with little capacity for ennobling suffering, by his ardent love of beauty and more catholic relish for grace and youth and sexual charm, achieved at length a religious expression—an expression of beauty, of practical service to other souls in their efforts to live more abundantly, more in the fulfilment of their best aspirations.

## IV

The religious successes of the Jesuits are too often forgotten, because their religious failures loom so large. Walter Pater, in an essay on Pascal, very well says :

“The Jesuit doctrine of sufficient grace is certainly, to use the familiar expression, a very pleasant doctrine, conducive to the due feeding of the whole flock of Christ, as being, as assuming them to be, what they really are, at the worst, God’s silly sheep.”\*

“Sufficient grace” exactly expresses what we might imagine came to be for Correggio the value of Christianity, after he had experienced its commerce among his easy-going religious patrons, whether abbess and sisters, or canon and fathers; as he had been touched by it at his wedding, or in his wife’s and mother’s piety.

It is to be noticed that these Madonnas retain all the conventional properties of the most religious pictures of their class. Even the little landscape glimpse behind the

\* Pater : Pascal, 64.

*St. Catherine* of the Louvre purports to represent her martyrdom and that of *St. Sebastian*. The draperies too are always conventional. *St. Jerome* is still incommoded with a most unconvincing lion in *Il Giorno*. The draperies change their character, it is true, but only to become flamboyant and operatic, not less conventional. Certainly as early as 1523, perhaps before, all these traditional elements of picture-making are used to set off some pretty accident of maternity; and this is where the original invention lies, the secret of these pictures' charm.

How the first shirt ever worn is drawn off a baby by a mother, who has as yet had but that one! Or the play marriage, and how the happy mother has to prompt the baby hand! Or how the baby seemed almost to understand that to slip a pretty gold ring over a slim finger was a worthy achievement, and charged with quite enough signification to deserve praise! \* (*See* illustration facing p. 106.)

\* Our reproduction of this charming little picture is from a version recently found in a bedroom of Alnwick Castle and hitherto unknown. It was formerly in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds. There are some Latin verses on the back, with an English version of about a century ago, perhaps made by some friend for Sir Joshua :

The sacred tablet  
 Various hazards past,  
 Comes back directed  
 To my hands at last !  
 All-gracious Beings  
 That here pictured stand,  
 The wonders of divine  
 Allegri's hand,  
 Till with this gift  
 And life at once I part,  
 Accept the offering  
 Of a grateful heart.

The Latin original more literally rendered terminates thus :



## V

It might be argued that these mothers and their babes would be better surrounded by some simple furniture and costumes not without elegance, as of well-to-do country people or retired nobility. Correggio can claim to be a religious painter, an exponent of Christianity, because this is not the case. He was right to retain all those traditional properties. He is a real disciple of Jesus, and he brings religion back to the world as the polite abbés did. He does not talk about judgment or about hell. Jesus and Mary and the saints are, for

"Divine Catherina, what thanks are due to thee,  
Blessed Virgin! what praise shall I bestow on thee, O Holy Child?"

After which is written in prose :

"From this precious gift, if, by your protection, I shall nevermore be parted, I will give up to you (tho' it is but a poor exchange), my whole heart and soul forever.

"Restored to me the 10th day of July, 1620, D.G."

At the bottom Sir J. Reynolds has written :

"I so far subscribe to the above resolution of Signor Guidiccioni, that no money shall ever tempt me to part with this picture.

"J. REYNOLDS,

"April 17, 1790."

A small fragment of Sir Joshua's writing is left at the top in which he apparently compares this picture with that at Naples.

Such is the information generously furnished to me with the photograph of the picture by her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland. Not having seen either it or the Naples version, or that favoured by modern critics (which was till lately in the possession of Signor Fabrizzi at Rome), I make no comment on the authenticity of this new version. Reynolds' appreciation will speak for the value of the picture, whether it be the original or a copy, a thousand times better than I could.

him, people whose function and pleasure it is to make us happy now in this world, to give us the grace both to forget and forgive our own sins, and even those of other people. This was probably the side of the Christianity he saw about him which he could appreciate and approve; the rest he possibly banished from his thoughts, as he banished it as much as possible from his art. Yes, he was right to retain all those traditional properties. They belonged by immemorial right of tradition, by the still diviner right of significance, to the only mother and child he painted—the Mother and Child for whom the churches had been built, a picture of whom was needed on the walls alike of the poor and the rich man's house. There was healing and preservation in such pictures; and by making his innocent happy mothers—healing to those whose senses were seared or dull—he may well have preserved those who lived near them from some of the worst evils: hardness of heart, boredom, joylessness.

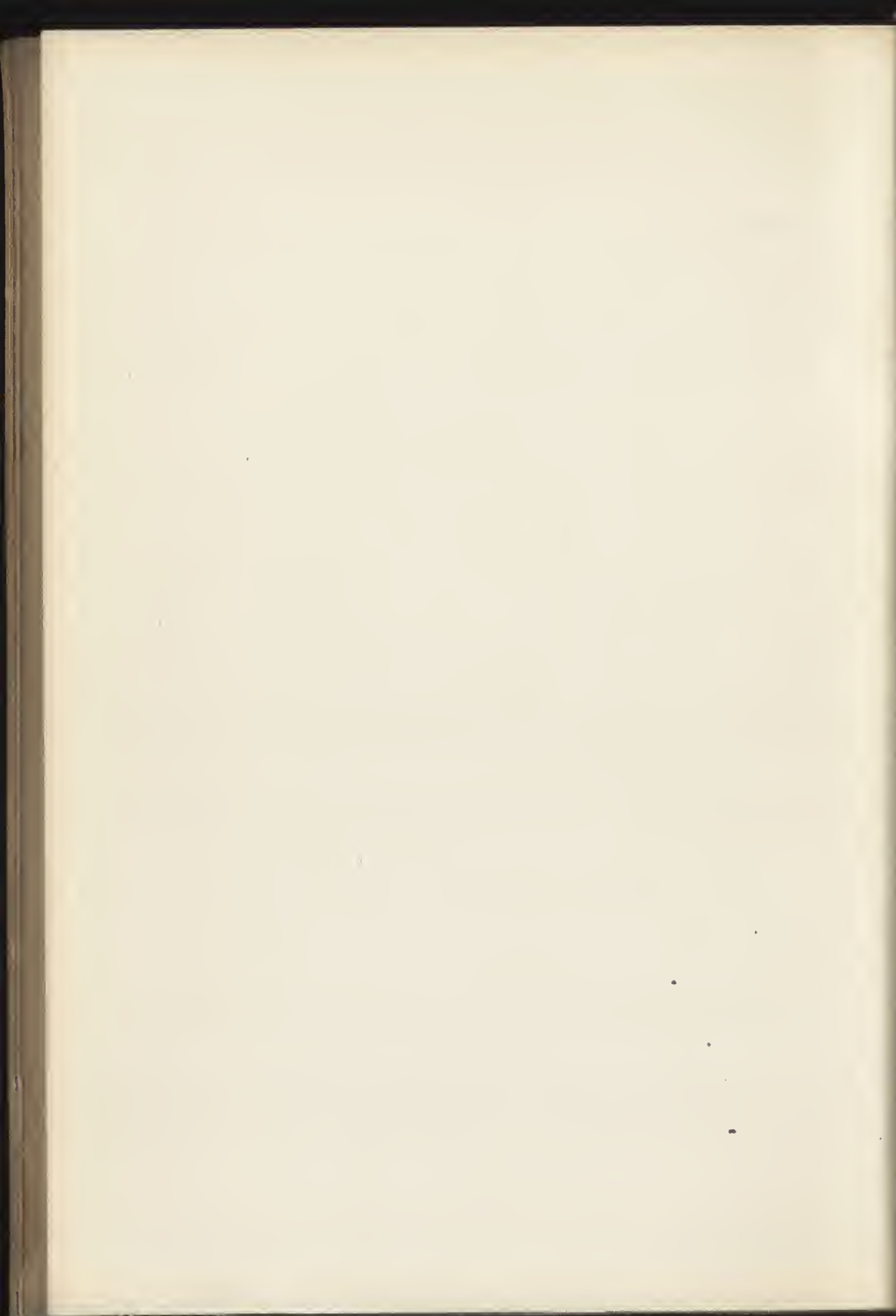
He had a great spirit, because he distinguished what was sound from what was corrupt; he judged more wisely than many reformers. He instinctively follows the method of Jesus, using the supernatural to adorn the real and important, instead of, as theologians use, employing the real and important to adorn and illustrate the fictitious and absurd. He perceived that those costly silks and brocades on homely people, that location of domestic persons among ruins under trees, over whose boughs lengths of heavy scarlet cloth are spread, with little primitive half-naked picturesque figures enacting martyrdoms in woods, three hundred yards from where those most peaceful groups are happy—he perceived that all this machinery of the Renaissance picture was like so many new colours in his



*Alinari*

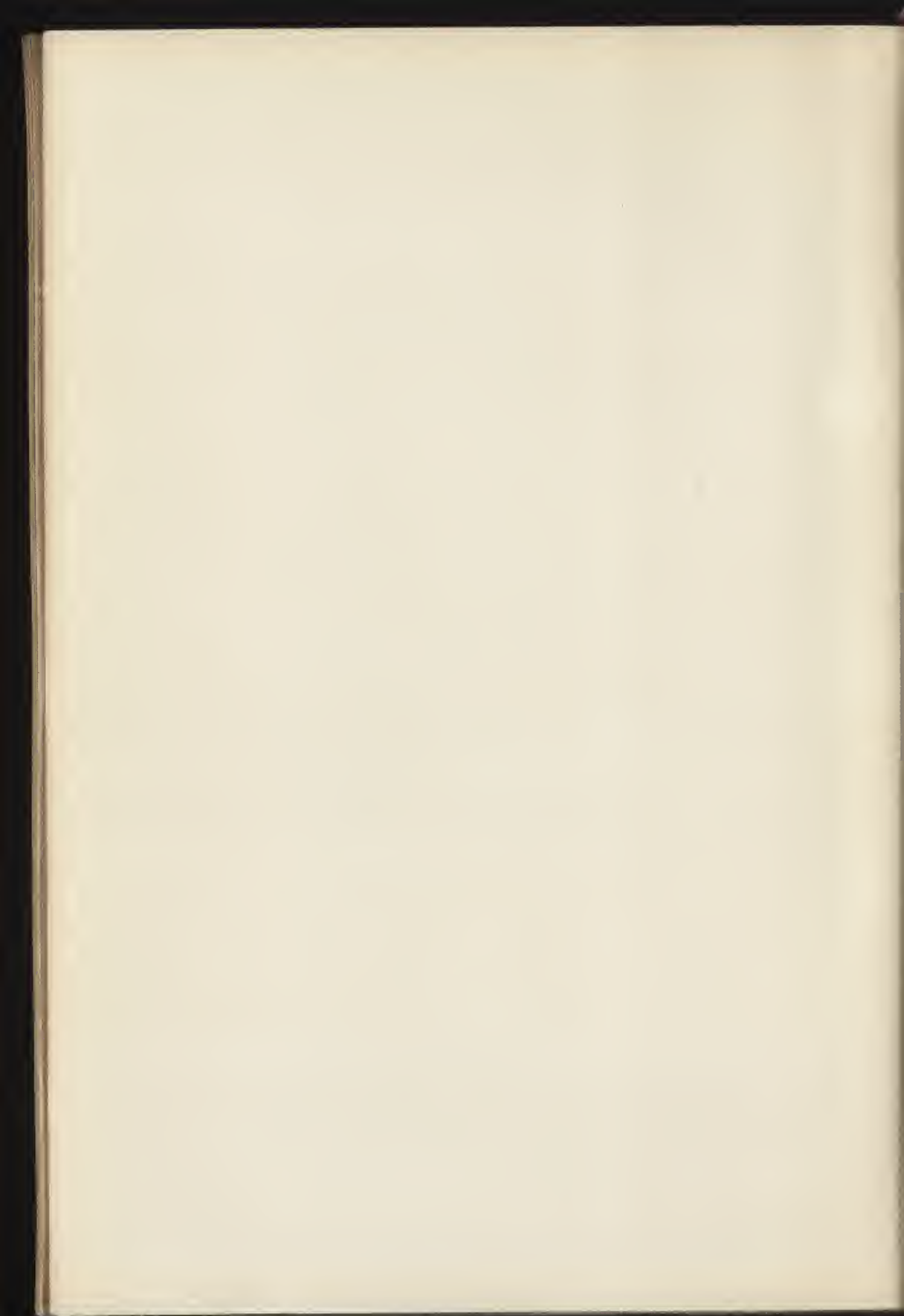
MADONNA ADORING THE CHILD. UFFIZI, FLORENCE

*Face p. 166*



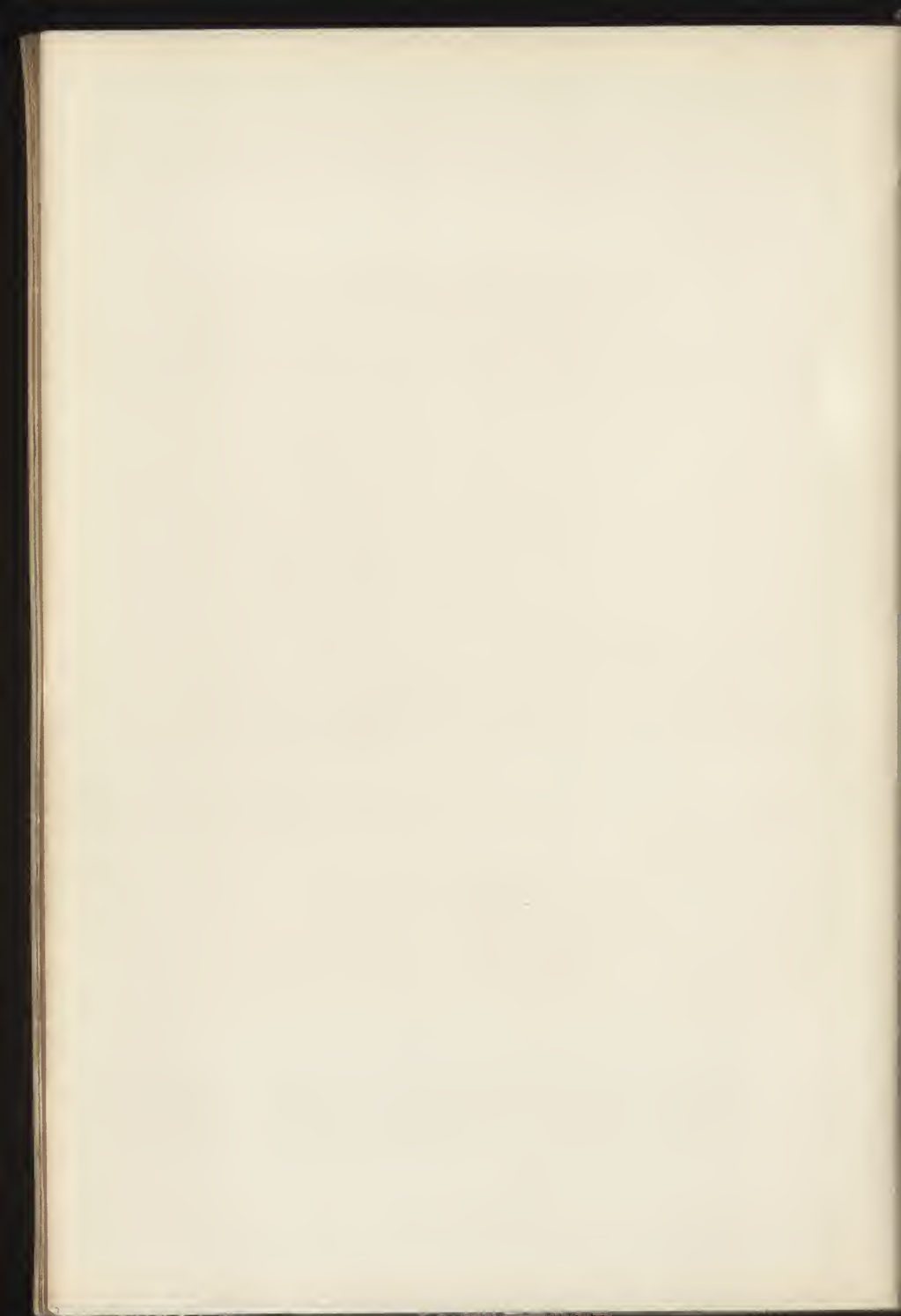
box. He could by its means add effects to his picture that no other colours would compass. They were idioms in his language, and art was his language, and not to have accepted all its expressiveness would have been to restrict his power for some impertinent consideration or other. But in all this he does not differ from the other great painters of his time, who did the same.

He is alone in insisting on that lively playfulness, half mischievous in the child, half humorous in the mother, and all those less definable shades of the same intimacy; leading on one hand to the playful adoration of the mother in the picture at Florence (*see* illustration facing p. 166), where the child is too young to respond, on the other to that meek young man breaking his mother's heart by leaving her, without breaking the delicate courtesy of the forms and tone of their communion, in the tender early masterpiece in Mr. Benson's collection. This liveliness, this amenity, are Correggio's distinctive note; they became one of the most distinctive notes of that theology whose success was to save so much as should survive of the Renaissance spirit, in the great period of France, when Paris succeeded Rome as the centre of the world. This note was the natural outcome of sufficient grace.



PART V

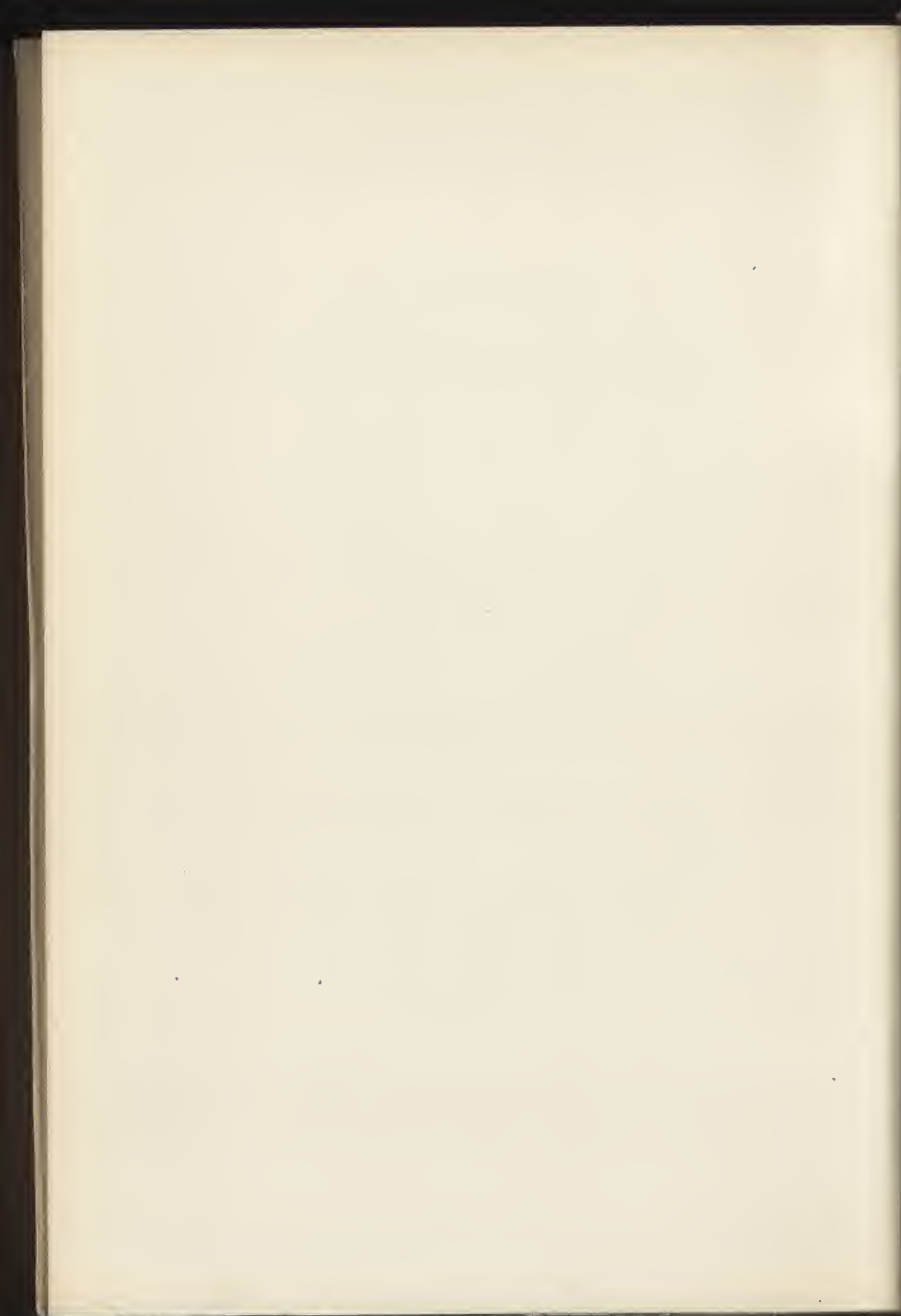
CLASSICAL PICTURES







AGONY IN THE GARDEN. APSLEY HOUSE, LONDON



## CHAPTER I

### “IO” AND “GANYMEDE”

#### I

Raphael and his pupils, working at a time when imperial Rome was rising as if from her grave all round them, remain as remote from the infinite *χρῆσις* of classical antiquity as a nun is from a nymph. While to one who never set foot in the Eternal City—to Correggio alone of Italian masters—was it given to

“Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
And hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.”

Critical Studies and Fragments: ARTHUR STRONG. p. 35.

IN Correggio's treatment of Greek mythology we have, perhaps, his most personal expression. He had come near to this already in the adolescent houris and cherubs with which he invaded and captured the Catholic heaven. The old uncompromising Puritan judgment on art touching such springs of emotion has retreated out of hearing before the modern spirit in England. Yet perhaps there are many who to-day are conscious of some ambiguity or even contradiction, in their attitude towards such works as the beautiful *Io* of Correggio; and there are some who loudly assume one which is as indefensible to-day as ever it was.

We all recognise the beauty of such myths as those of

Leda or Io ; but there may be those who feel that if the truth must be said, such stories are archaic in the same way as the crudity of Old Testament language, here and there, is archaic. They belong to a peculiar stage in human development. They have been left behind. To dwell on them in current language, to present them before our eyes in a picture, unless with a very marked archaistic mannerism, must necessarily be a sign of bad taste or even worse (*see* Frontispiece).

## II

Perhaps the true function of Art in this rather confused sphere may be illustrated by the contrast offered in some words from the Book of Proverbs and Keats' "La belle dame sans merci."

The old Hebrew gnomic poet is giving forcible and captivating expression to a moral experience ; and he says of the man who has been so simple as to listen to the strange woman's allurements, "He knoweth not that the dead are there ; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."\*

This is as good as could be for the purpose of enforcing a simple moral perception. But how is the whole transfigured when Keats writes :

And there we slumbered on the moss,  
And there I dreamed, ah, woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dreamed  
On the cold hill-side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death pale were they all ;  
Who cried, "La belle dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall !"

\* Prov. ix. 18.

I saw their starved lips in the gloom  
 With horrid warning gapèd wide ;  
 And I awoke and found me here  
 On the cold hill-side.

The moral perception, the vividness of which inspired both writers, is the same, but the august and dramatic brevity of the old text has become charged with compassion : the sense of the inexplicability of evil has surged up, and giant-like forbids the crude impulsive scorn and rebuke which make the earlier treatment so stern.

The magical effects produced by the sense of sex when it is roused in youth, the glamour it can cast over its objects, are felt by the modern poet with an intimacy and delicacy that surpass everything of the kind in ancient literatures, whether Greek or Hebrew. Howbeit, another and yet an earlier writer in the same collection of Proverbs has a distinct sense of this magic : “ There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not : The way of an eagle in the air ; the way of a serpent upon a rock ; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea ; and the way of a man with a maid.”\* The sense of magic is there, and is both naively and forcibly expressed ; but mark the kind of difference between it and Keats :

I met a lady in the meads,  
 Full beautiful, a faëry's child ;  
 Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
 And her eyes were wild. . . .

She took me to her elfin grot,  
 And there she gazed and sighèd deep ;  
 And there I shut her wild sad eyes  
 So kissed to sleep.

\* Prov. xxx. 18, 19.

A difference of the same kind as exists between an archaic treatment of Leda and Leonardo's conception, or between a reference such as Hesiod might have made to Io, and Correggio's masterpiece, is, I think, plain. But the parallel is not exact; for in Keats and the texts from Proverbs, the pity of the ignorance, the weakness, and their results takes the first place, and the pleasure and exhilaration of the self-realisation are viewed merely in relation to them. The sense that wisdom must condemn or wish to teach how to avoid, is with them the uppermost; they view the event essentially in the same light as that which gives the words of Milton's angel such terrible force when he describes Eve as made so beautiful for Adam's delight, but also made

So awful, that with honour thou may'st love  
 Thy mate, who sees thee when thou art seen least wise.  
 Paradise Lost, viii. 577.

### III

Now Greek stories, and Correggio's pictures illustrating them, view the facts under quite a different day. The immensity of the attraction exerted is regarded as divine, something not to be questioned. Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, appeals to this sense of the divinity, the inevitability which transfigures sexual attraction under some conditions; for, as Mr. Gaston Paris very acutely remarks, their clandestine marriage has nearly all the characters of illicit intercourse, and really only serves to soothe their prejudices and ours.\* Now in *Romeo and Juliet*, or, if

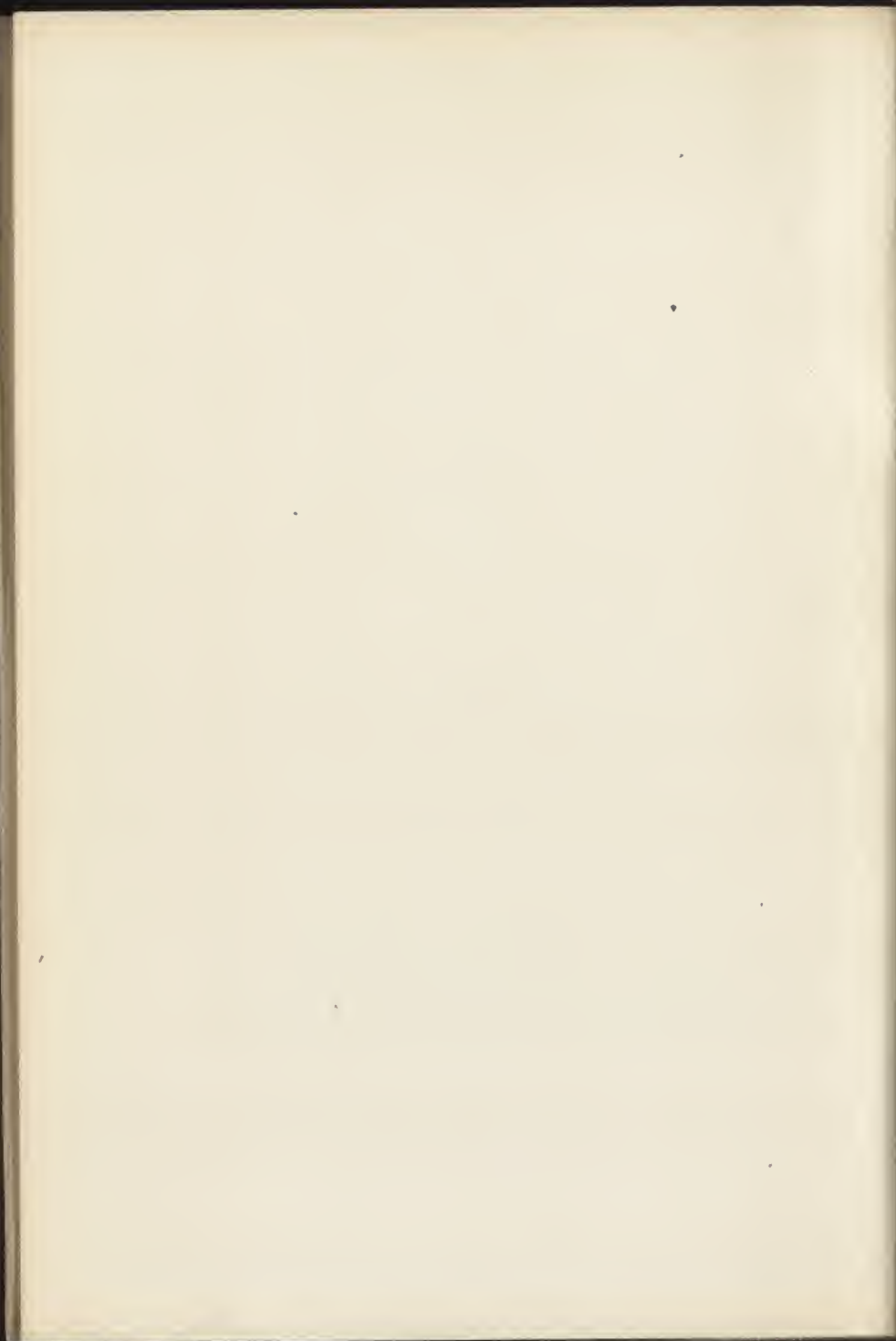
\* "*Romeo et Juliette*, le seule poème d'amour qu'on puisse opposer à Tristan et Iseult, semble offrir un exemple du contraire; mais le



*Hans Holbein*

"LA NOTTE" (THE NATIVITY). DRESDEN GALLERY

*Face p. 174*





one likes better, in *Tristan und Isolde* (only there the note of conscious rebellion is introduced), this sense of divinity and inevitableness in regard to sexual attraction is transfigured very much in the same way as Keats' ballad transfigures the perception and method of the writer in *Proverbs*. Thoughts and infinite associations are brought by those glowing scenes around us, till they weave as it were an enchanted woodland lodge like that in which the legendary Tristram and Isolt meet. The fundamental circumstances are overgrown, and we feel far more than we see. In the Greek story the fundamental circumstances are kept clearly in sight ; the art that makes them impressive is both naive and dramatic, like that of the writer in *Proverbs*. The huge cloud descending, with its vastness, its impalpability, brings home to us the uselessness of struggle, and also the enveloping deliciousness of the invasive and pervasive force divinely exerted. The treatment is plastic, direct, and dramatic. And Correggio's treatment is so too, but he adds—not indeed what Shakespeare and Keats add—but something in a measure equivalent to that drenching of their subject with associations and romance and compassion. Painting does not lend itself to just their treatment; yet Correggio brings the dark woods near, the sound of water, the feverish lapping of it by a thirsty deer, and in the grey and solemn cloud adumbrates a divinity mature, handsome, almost courteous : while the white Io's explicit limbs and features, conscious of the imminent kiss, express, far more intimately than any words, the brief and acute

mariage des amants de Verone, qui se cache de leur parents et du monde, et qui meurent à cause de ce secrèt même, se rapproche des amours défendues par son caractère furtif et son opposition aux devoirs familiaux.”—*Poemes et Legendes du Moyen Age*, p. 176.

bliss with which her nature enters on the consummation of its sovereign function.

We have here not only the deliciousness of self-realisation, but its inevitability expressed, like Zeus in the cloud, with a large and elemental eloquence. It is a great achievement that Correggio, though there is nothing archaic in the dressing of his Io's hair, or in the treatment of the forms in limbs and extremities, has, nevertheless, attained this great impressive simplicity (as Michael Angelo does in his Eve) without imposing upon himself any artificial restraint or affected archaism of manner, such as in recent times has been successfully resorted to by artists like Puvis de Chavannes and Burne-Jones.

M. Gaston Paris pointed out also how this primal divine character of the attraction does occasionally justify some breach of social law, as is illustrated by the legend of Tristram and Isolt where it is symbolised in the magic drink. But he warns us that this justification of passion is one which lovers are only too apt to claim, even when it is not really lent them by compelling circumstance. And this is, no doubt, the truth. Many will think the exceptions are so rare that it would be well if art never dwelt on them. They would like to be able to prosecute every attempt of artistic effort in these fields, which they reserve for the exercise of moral abhorrence.

Apart from the more than doubtful value that belongs to the exercise of moral abhorrence, certain practical considerations may be urged for a different treatment. Sexual licence exists; nor has that society ever been established, even before individual freedom was thought of, that succeeded in suppressing it. With every large development of individual liberty it has flourished

exceedingly. The provocations to such licence, and the glorifiers of it, are to be met with everywhere. A truly artistic treatment must needs in the actual world raise it from a sphere of hypocrisy, or rebellion, or tawdry squalor, into the world of imagination; must underline its squalor or insecurity and the pity of them, or else lend it a charm of circumstances which transfigure it, give it wings. The institution of marriage, as marriage is desired and, to a greater or less degree, achieved by those kinds of individuals which our society may be said to aim at producing, is, indeed, nothing but a work of art, a masterpiece of social creativeness, enveloping sexual instincts with a world of charm and manifold sacraments. These primal instincts, so necessary to the perpetuation of the race, in marriage join hands with the most self-applauded purposes of an intelligent individual. A successful union deserves Milton's glowing and generous appreciation:

Hail, wedded love, &c.

Paradise Lost, iv. 750.

Correggio's *Io*, though more confined in its influence, raises its theme into a world of poetry, making it impressive, profound, exhilarating, just as the institution of marriage makes the sexual relation solemn, important, inspiring. The satisfaction of a passing appetite is made beautiful for contemplation in the one case, as in the other it is changed into a goal of ambition, a crown of honourable life. The appeal of the institution and that of the picture are alike to the imagination, and not to sense; the one opens a door into Utopia, the other into fairyland. A prolonged harmony of our satisfactions and sufferings

is an ideal dependent for its realisation on the right use of imagination.

The cults of the ancient world, such as those of Astarte and Aphrodite, are not rightly conceived until we think of them as having heightened, solemnised, and, in some measure, both organised and restrained the grossness of their worshippers' animalism and luxury. We can realise this when we think of what is done to-day: how to live in the spirit is to treat the outward acts of life as symbols;—the act of eating as representing that of absorbing the influence of a greater soul, the act of washing as a figure of the way mind and heart may labour to remove the traces of a repented deed. Of course, neither work of art nor religious observance can ever originate an action good or bad; but where effort and impulse exist such things may be as the flowers and trees of a Sussex garden to the songsters that have crossed the weary sea. Henceforth they recompense progress, they welcome energy, buoyancy, joy and peace. Merely to contemplate the functions of life performed with divine companions in beautiful places, as the Christian watches his passionate struggle undergone by a diviner nature, has a recreative and revivifying effect.

#### IV

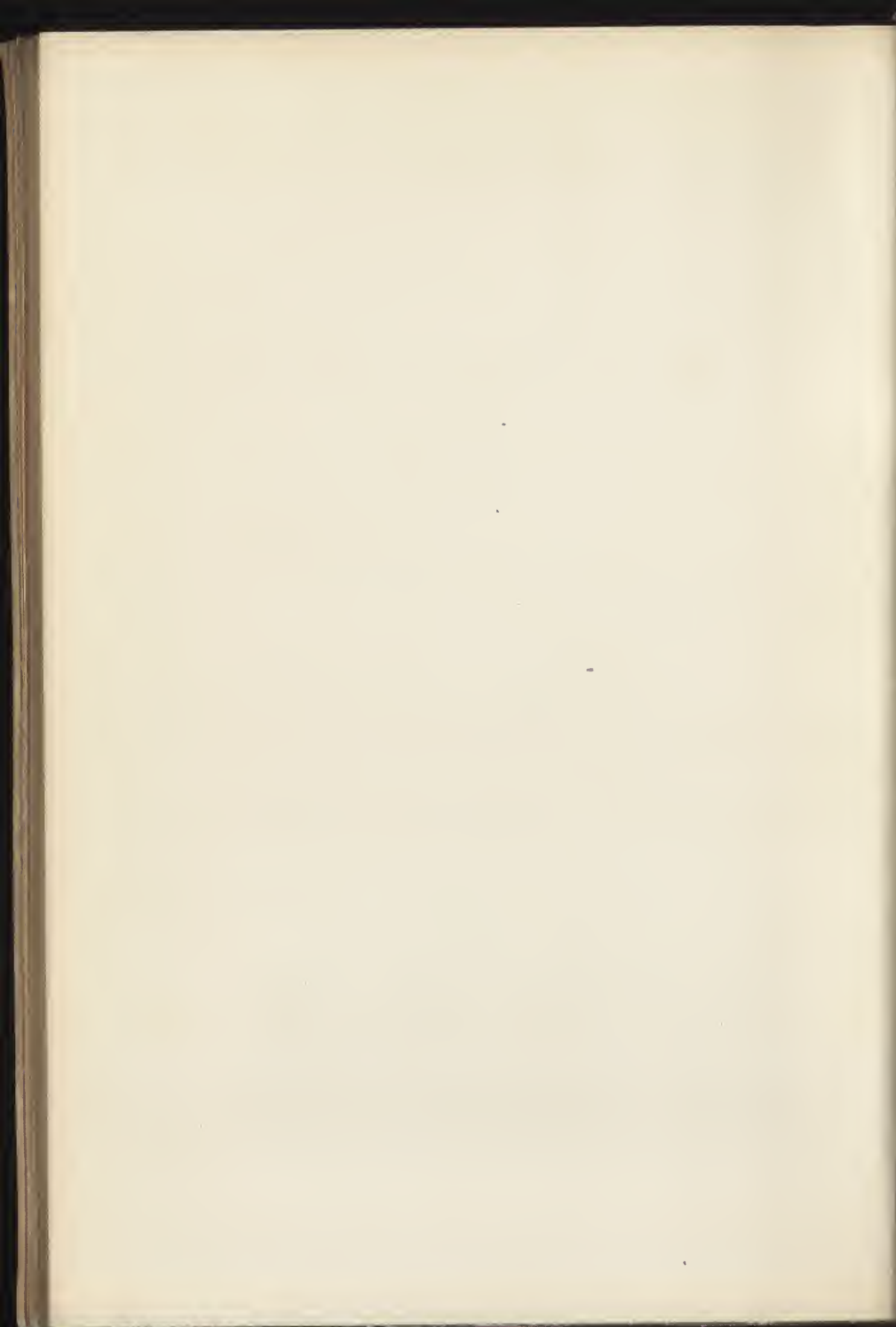
In writing I have had to select typical treatments; I would, however, not be understood to imply that there are none other possible. I do not defend the pathetic nude, the romantic nude, the archaic and the classical nudes, to the exclusion of other spirits. Another obvious use of the nude is the gay and contagious appeal to the animal fact underlying conventions, which refreshes our relation to



*Hans Holbein the Younger*

CUPID'S READING LESSON. NATIONAL GALLERY

*Face p. 178*



those laboriously achieved conventions themselves, and is a proper use of the freedom with which they should endow the soul. Before we condemn some apparently licentious work of art, we should make sure what is the true nature of the spirit by which it moves us, of the glamour it exerts; and be quite sure that that spirit or glamour is not better than our confused shamefacedness, our crude censoriousness, or smirking hypocrisy, or cynical indifference.

Respectability has been so clumsy-handed in dealing out censure, that it has not a little discredited the act of blame in this field. The man who is actively destroying his integrity, or that of others, deserves not only to be blamed, but to be restrained by force. Yet an act which might imperil one man's integrity may increase that of a more liberal soul: hence the need of fine appreciation such as affectionate sympathy alone yields to those who are not endowed with insight. They who only blame when moved by affectionate appreciation to do so, are not likely to become factors of disintegration by their censoriousness. To add to the integrity or harmonious adequacy of individuals and societies is the highest human glory—a glory which is certainly due to every successful work of art.

V

All this concerns the effect of such works as the *Io* on ordinary persons. But for the creative artist the kindling power of a beautiful creation in this field is also of the highest practical, the highest religious value. To regard such pictures as food for exceptionally gifted natures alone must lead to a very high estimation of their practical service. The cost to

many an exceptional soul of the creative effort necessary to raise this function into the realm of beauty, to endow it with wings, is saved; if such an one is brought in contact with a genuine masterpiece in which this is already done, he can turn his energies to new conquests, or refine or amplify that success. In either case he begins where the other leaves off, or at least takes an infinitely shorter time to arrive there. So vast a field awaits creative genius; so many motives, so many relationships and aspects of our nature have never yet been effectively transformed so as to be regarded as possible furniture or machinery for the house of a wholesome soul, that the value of a masterpiece recreating, to such splendid effect, so primary an experience, is immense to all who are sufficiently conscious to aim at such a goal. If the imaginative reason is little by little to take over the functions of traditional religions, as it has been prophesied that it will, then indeed the *Io* of Correggio is likely to become a greater object of reverence and admiration than it has ever been. For this is a unique painting; and though its parallels may probably have existed, they have either been destroyed or so damaged as to leave it practically on a solitary eminence.

## VI

It now remains to come to close quarters with Correggio's pictures actually dealing with these delightful themes. I said they were probably his most intense personal expression; but I do not wish it to be supposed that I consider all his efforts in this direction as equally touched with the profound and exquisite poetry of the



*Io*,—to awaken some apprehensive sense for which one may well resort to Keats, or Milton, or Shakespeare at their best. No other classical theme executed by Correggio seems to me to approach its high success. That which comes nearest to it is the *Ganymede* (on the authenticity of which Signor Ricci's ingenuity has so very unnecessarily cast doubt). The *Ganymede*, that second brightest star in all Correggio's crown—of this, for a seeming-clever consideration, he is to be robbed. Such has too often been the felicity of the modern critic, so thoroughly armoured as to have no shrinking sentiency left about him. But to this we will return. For the moment we would be wholly possessed by the beauty of this lovely idyll (*see* illustration facing p. 186).

The child, too fair for earth, has been caught up, to the bewilderment of his dog, from a lonely corner of a hillside meadow where he kept his father's sheep. The eagle of the sovereign will has found the child's shirt slip on the fair form which he fears to grip too roughly, and descends once more, swinging back and down as he re-affirms his hold and pauses in his flight before soaring aloft.

A poet, not being bound to present with plastic completeness, could suggest terror or anguish, at least in some degree, without breaking the main impression of rapture and felicity which belongs to the story. Correggio was instinctively aware that to attempt such things would be to betray the limitations of his means. We can imagine his *Ganymede* to have been lost in a dream of how pleasant a motion flight must be, as he saw the eagle circling nearer, until when he was actually seized and carried off, his one preoccupation was to lend himself to the movement of the mighty wings, which gave such a

wonderful realisation to his day-dream ; and as the eagle swooped lower once more, to have felt laughingly almost afraid he was going to be cheated of his splendid journey through the empyrean and deposited again whence he had been taken. Any one who has swung children at arm's length to give them rushing sensations approaching those of birds, will have perceived, as it were in embryo, these among other emotions aroused in his little friends—fear of continuance in one, fear of arrestation in another—but both merged in a laughing ecstasy.

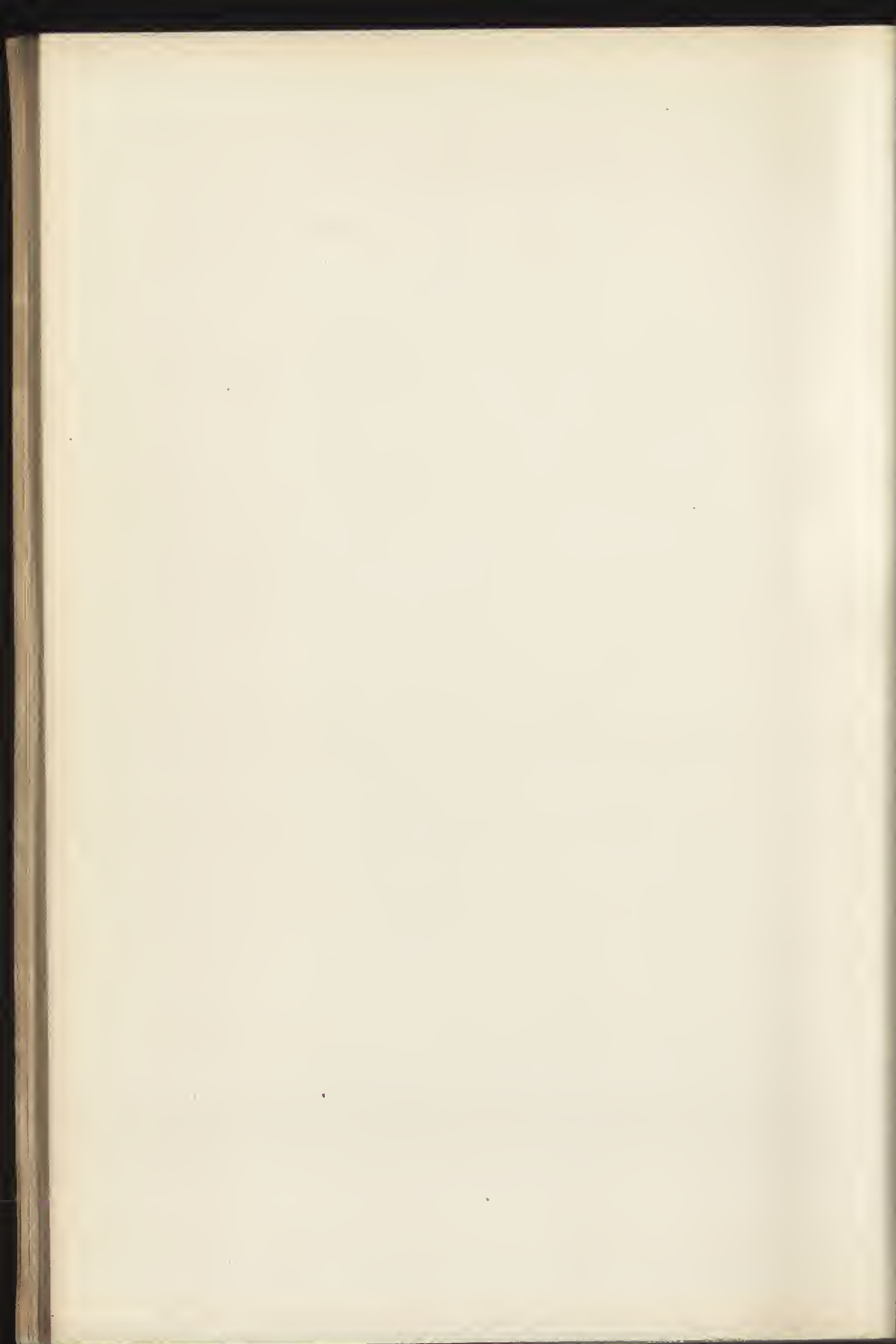
I said, we can imagine all this : and I think we shall be wise to do so, in order to purge our minds of the effect produced by such comments as those of Signor Ricci, which I shall soon have to examine. Though these suggestions may help to break down the vain strictures of the unimaginative critical mind, we must guard ourselves against attributing our imaginations, even when they happen to be valid, to Correggio, or we shall resemble his critics all too sadly. A painter producing such a piece might have said to himself all that I have put forward ; but more probably he would have thought out nothing of the kind. Conscious only of the particular emotions of which I have here indicated the more general relations, he would have arrived at them by a very different road. For instance, the position of the eagle's wings was probably suggested to Correggio by the exigency of fitting the arabesque into its intended narrow panel ; though no doubt, as he overcame this difficulty, he would feel satisfaction at the aptness of his conception from a narrative or dramatic point of view. It were hopeless to do more than indicate the possibilities with regard to such points. To those who have never experienced the creative mood or felt how suggestions



*Alinari*

"IL GIORNO." THE MADONNA AND ST. JEROME  
PARMA GALLERY

*Face p. 182*



arise, they must remain a mystery. Total inexperience in these fields is what has made easy, for accomplished men like Mr. Berenson and Signor Ricci, the commission of notable blunders.

Correggio had his Ganymede given to him, for he copies it out of one of the Cathedral pendentives which we have already discussed (p. 40). He merely takes his laughing cherub and relates him to a lovely legend; and he does this boldly and expeditiously. The laugh on the face is softened with wonder; the wrist of one arm is hooked sharply over the narrow bone of the wing by the child's instinctive efforts to support the weight of his head, instead of being softly thrust between the clouds; while the stretched-out hand grasps the large feathers under the other wing, instead of separating the cloud in front of his advancing companion. The drapery, the main lines of which already made a lovely arabesque with those of the figure, is very skilfully altered so as not to disturb this, and yet to hint how the eagle's talons are employed; while the bird's wings show us clearly that he pauses in his flight and momentarily swirls towards the earth he has just left.

Nothing could be more prodigiously artful; it is just another instance of the kind of development from one figure to another that we have traced all through the pendentives. It is perfectly successful, and is only inferior to the *Io* because its subject is less poetical, less central. No artistic creator could ever imagine that any pupil or imitator of Correggio, yet known to Fame, had been capable either of the invention shown in adapting this figure to its present use or in rendering the other parts of the composition;—no creator, that is, who had given himself the trouble to master the elements of the question.

## VII

And now let us hear Signor Ricci.

We are bound to admit that the *exact* [sic] reproduction of this figure under the altered conditions is directly opposed both to good sense and good taste. The boy soars upward with all the serenity of a practised aeronaut.

Was this truly the best Signor Ricci could do? A "practised aeronaut" seems so far fetched when rapture and felicity belong to the story.

Yet it is evident that the Ganymede's left arm is partly in the shadow of the eagle's head and neck, whereas the light strikes full on that of the angel. A more obvious absurdity is apparent in the arrangement of the drapery. In the downward flight of the angel, his garment naturally flutters behind him, sweeping upwards. The same lines are preserved in the drapery of the Ganymede, in direct contradiction to his supposed ascent through the air.

One would think Signor Ricci had never watched a bird, certainly never watched one carrying something heavy, of which he has not got a perfectly sure hold. But let him assure himself that "the physical laws of aerial motion could" (almost certainly did) "escape Correggio," whose imagination was diluted with very little science; but the practical effects of aerial motion under different circumstances had, no doubt, not escaped him. On the point of the lighting, I may remark that to me it is evident that the eagle's head could not cast its shadow where Signor Ricci concludes it must fall; and, secondly, that the plane of the left arm, like the slant of

the figure in relation to a rectangular frame, has been altered so that it is no longer in full light, and that this alteration is even more marked in the drawing at Weimar (not by Correggio), which Signor Ricci presses into the evidence; for in this drawing even the drapery seems to hesitate whether it will think with Correggio or with his modern critic, and begins to descend that the argument may ascend. If this sketch was really by the inventor of the picture (as Signor Ricci must suppose if he places any reliance on it), why on earth did the draughtsman forget his own improvements in carrying out his picture?

Signor Ricci shows that he thinks the actual execution of this work too good for Parmigianino, when he winds up his attack on Correggio's property by opening a door through which to secure his retreat. "We are loth," he says, "to pronounce with the same confidence against the picture (as against the Weimar drawing), taking into account its many fine qualities"; and he proceeds to do something approaching to tardy justice to as many of these as his view of an artist's power of improving on himself admits.

"What led the learned and accomplished critic into this mare's nest?" one may well ask. It was merely the discovery which he made that Correggio had in this instance distinctly repeated a figure. When one looks at this fact in the light of the considerations put forward in Part II., ch. ii. if one had any wonder, it would be that this was, as yet, the only instance noticed; but even before making acquaintance with those considerations it was open for anybody to imagine that some patron, Frederigo Gonzaga perhaps, had fallen in love with the cherub in the pendentive and cried: "He is a very Ganymede! paint him for

me as Ganymede." But even to do what Signor Ricci imagines impossible for a great artist to do is, in fact, a very artist-like and master-like manner of proceeding. Our great contemporary Rodin, who, unfortunately, is never tired of insisting in words on an impertinent logic of realism, after a fashion which was, we may be sure, quite foreign to Correggio, nevertheless in his practice treats that logic at its true value. He took a figure of one of his most lovely groups; a young man swept along above the back of a flying or swimming siren, whose hands, clinging to her wrists above her head, explain the action of his body, which in painful rigidity trails back over her lithe and rapid form. This figure he took and set up as though it were kneeling, and throwing up its arms in an agony of despairing aspiration, and called it *Prayer*. It wants but little knowledge of anatomy to see that if the figure is kneeling, every bone and muscle in its frame must have altered relations to what they would have were it dragged along by the wrists. But Rodin's first concern—as it is, indeed, the first concern of all great artists—is to address an audience; and he has the instinctive tact to feel that his audience is composed of those who are either too ignorant of anatomy to perceive the violence done to the facts in cases like these, or of those who are sufficiently cultured to condone it, if his meaning—the beauty he has conceived—is vividly expressed, in spite of it. Indeed, Rodin's habit of using casts of his creations to enable him to compose others, occasionally by mere juxtaposition—as when he laid a little figure of a young woman round the neck and over the lap of the figure of *La belle Heaulmière*, and had them cast together as a group—is a manifestation of the creative impulse entirely analogous





*Hanfstaengl*

GANYMEDE. VIENNA GALLERY

*Face p. 186*



to, and even more naïve than that which I have traced through the eight pendentives in Part II., ch. ii. It is the same process which Reynolds describes as used by Gainsborough to help him invent landscapes. Rodin uses casts of his own works just as Gainsborough did sticks and pieces of glass and coal, or as Correggio in his mind turned and arranged anew his figures, perhaps with the help of rough drawings, perhaps without any material aid of the kind.

This has been rather a long excursion after the best-intentioned kind of thieves and robbers; and I live in expectation of that learned German who, guided by the similarity which I have hinted at as latent in the mentality of the author of the Weimar drawing, and that of Signor Ricci, will establish Signor Ricci's authorship of that drawing, either in the body or out of the body. What does it matter when, where or how such things come to pass? they are ideas of the mind, intimate revelations of a spirit; why should it be called unimaginative? especially in view of the fact that its learning does often exalt it to a dizzy height. Let it know what it can, I am content so long as it be understood that nothing which I have said proves me to know that Correggio's *Ganymede* is not by Parmigianino, or Michelangelo Anselmi. I am convinced, but I do not *know* so much as that.\*

\* It is characteristic of the methods of modern criticism that Signor Ricci finds it quite natural to lay stress on this picture's having been attributed to Parmigianino in the earliest mentions of it, and yet himself to suggest Anselmi as its author. If this early attribution weakens the case for Correggio, it must weaken far more that for Anselmi, which is brand new, instead of having an ever increasing weight of opinion behind it, such as the attribution to Correggio possesses. It

## VIII

Fortunately these two masterpieces are, on the whole well preserved. The *Io* especially has been very little retouched; the replica at Berlin, which would seem to have once been by the master himself, having undergone all those drastic amendments to which over-popular pictures are generally devoted. This latter was repainted by Prudhon after it had suffered many things at the hands of physicians; the background of tall trees, however, seems to be a variation due to the poetical imagination of its first creator. The picture at Vienna bears a few slight traces of patching on the thigh and calf, and still slighter ones on the back and shoulder, but is otherwise almost as Correggio left it.

The *Ganymede* has been much less fortunate. There are three large patches on the hip and thigh; the top one eats into the drapery. There is a patch in the shadow of either calf, and a large one to the left of the towering rock in the middle distance, and a small one to its right. Two other small ones skirt the dog's back, and there is a square piece let in to the centre of the tree. This leaves the top of the picture wholly untouched, and all the more important features in the lower half; the dog is divinely painted.

is, of course, possible that any attractive work by Correggio, Parmigianino, or Anselmi under the same circumstances would have been called a Parmigianino then, if in the namer's vocabulary "Parmegianino" stood for "delicious;" just as to-day every work of the school which is too good for these lesser men is obviously by "Correggio," because in our view he alone of the three is a "great master."

## CHAPTER II

### CLASSICAL PICTURES (*continued*)

#### I

ONE little picture treating a pagan subject, the *Piping Faun* (see illustration facing p. 62), is often classed with Correggio's earliest works, and was perhaps painted before the *Madonna and St. Francis* of 1515. It is a very puzzling picture, for not a single feature in the landscape presents the slightest affinity with corresponding features in any other work by Correggio. But the figure and even more the drapery are unmistakably his, and would place the picture at a rather later date, about the time the frescoes for the Camera di San Paolo were taken in hand, 1518. One Venetian painter who perhaps might have painted such a landscape, or taught another how to do it, had been settled at Parma during Antonio's boyhood; and several of his pictures remain in the town, including two treating pagan subjects. Cima da Conegliano ought, one might fancy, to have exerted both influence and fascination over the young Correggio, but it is impossible to discover such an influence; for even this landscape would seem to indicate some Venetian nearer the young Titian or Giorgione rather than Cima, who remains always Bellinesque. The difficulty of harmonising the apparent facts might lead us

to imagine that Correggio had bought or bartered from some travelling artist a damaged landscape emanating from a Venetian master's workshop, and had himself supplied the figure to cover the damage, or perhaps had been commissioned to do this by some patron. Confidence in solving such a problem as this picture presents would seem to indicate that familiarity with its difficulties had at last bred contempt for them. In any case, the leathery forms of the drapery point to the period when the Diana in her chariot was designed, as the bluntness and squareness of the limbs do to the heavy children in the trellised ovals above her head. The picture is a little masterpiece; for the felicity of adding such a figure to such a landscape is quite as much the unique gift of a great artist, as that of creating landscape and figure together would have been.

## II

The *Antiope*, or else *Cupid's Reading Lesson*, is considered as next in date to this little *Piping Faun*, yet it is difficult to explain this convention of criticism. If the study of a sleeping woman (at Windsor) really relates to the *Antiope* as is supposed, it must certainly be regarded as one of the last works the master painted. If the mastery of the treatment of pigment, the variety and freedom displayed, are to influence us, it must at least rank with work done after the Cathedral was finished. If we seek for parallels for the use of form we shall at first find it difficult to establish any with pictures either early or late, yet the hand of *Antiope* surely claims a right to clasp that of *Io*: while we shall nowhere find a fellow for the sleeping *Cupid*, save in the roguish faun whose head occupies the



*Anderson*

DANAË. BORGHESE GALLERY, ROME

*Fate p. 190*





foreground of the *Allegory of Vice* in the Louvre (see illustration facing p. 206). The Antiope's feet are also noteworthy, and certainly are better assorted with those in the latest group than with the feet in *Cupid's Reading Lesson*. The fact that this picture has been varnished, and is left dirty, and therefore looks older and less astonishingly modern than the *Io*, *Ganymede* or *Danae* would seem to be the only real ground for the critical convention which regards it as contemporary with the Camera di San Paolo. Yet perhaps there is another reason; the ordinary Renaissance treatment of Greek myth is not transcended as it is in the *Io* and the *Ganymede*. Though the more part of classical subjects treated in that period evince the hybrid character of their inspiration much more strongly, it may be clearly traced in the *Antiope* and *Leda* and *Danae*, as also in *Cupid's Reading Lesson*. Not only are the antique stories imperfectly understood, or, as it were, half-remembered: a foreign strain, a racy admixture of the conjurer's own finery is found in the apparel of this resuscitated grace. In Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, or in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, we have what may be looked on as extreme instances of this pouring of new wine into old bottles, for such it is in its origin: but in its result it is a new poetry, a new sentiment, a new atmosphere of the greatest imaginative value; such as should be a lesson to pedants and purists for all time. In this instance, a glance being sufficient to mark the difference between Shakespeare's Theseus and the Theseus of the Attic dramatists, a crowd may stare and point: but really not only were the resurrected heroes and divinities of antiquity draped in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sentiments and manners, and the too scanty costumes with which they issued from

the grave eked out with the Sunday wear of those who welcomed them ; but Sophocles and Æschylus had been as kind and as unconscious of incongruity, when they lent folk-heroes their sentiments, knowledge, and garments. Folk-stories themselves, too, however far one ferrets back, are always compacted of the same glaring anachronisms : —old names with new minds, old actions on new stages, old buttons on new coats.

These old things are really beautiful, like precious stones—a name, an action, a picture—people telling stories to children, poets creating, use them naturally, make new images, and new combinations of them, and fuse them together with the best of their own thoughts and sentiments. That precious pedant who says, “ This belongs to a thousand years ago : away with it ! let me not contaminate my pure thought, my pure sense of beauty with it ! ” forgets, poor dullard that he is, that every word he utters is a thing of a thousand years ago, and with roots in a yet more distant past. He forgets, or is incapable of feeling, how every sentiment that softens, thrills, or exhilarates his life, has grown and been transformed (or, if he will, adulterated) age after age, until it reached his mother in all its inexplicable complexity, with all its overwhelming vitality, and melted her to tears time and again ; but also nursed her patience, her gentleness, her grace and charm, till she became even for him something half ideal. How wretched is that man who hangs his heart on the obvious ! How wretched is that artist who sees with his eye alone, whose mind colours nothing with remembered glory, whose heart softens nothing with reflected sentiment, whose blood makes nothing throb or tingle with infectious fire and energy ! All great poetry,

all complete painting, is regardless of anachronisms ; uses the pretty relics of the past, and its great names and actions, as simply as we use the words of our mother tongue, as shamelessly as we borrow its lucky idioms and fit them to our need. Whitman was one-eared, Monet one-eyed, Zola half-hearted, Nietzsche half-souled.

Those who wake up to new ideas and find them more than they can master, are mastered by them. They cry, "Away with the old ! let us try to grasp to-day ; why waste time with old wives' tales and moribund conceptions ?" They are so absorbed by the effort to master a little novelty, that they have no time, no capacity for antiquity ; but that exists too, and is of to-day far more certainly, because it has been woven into the very texture of thought and speech, of habit and custom. If they attend to it at all they try to pin it back in some past epoch to which they think it belongs : but they only strike its shadow, for it is alive, and its buoyant incorporeal energy is part of the air they breathe, and like a cloud reflects the light by which they see ; their novelty is often an accidental effect produced by its passage far over their heads. Their Superman may be a fleeting mirage in its bosom, and they wildly funny to no purpose. Wisdom accepts the past, the present, and the future, as what they are : cases of type from which she, like a compositor, selects characters in order to print again her eternal message in a new form. She knows that she could never set up good sense if she refused all the letters of her alphabet which are contained in the case of the past. There are not enough in the present and future to spell half the words she needs.

## III

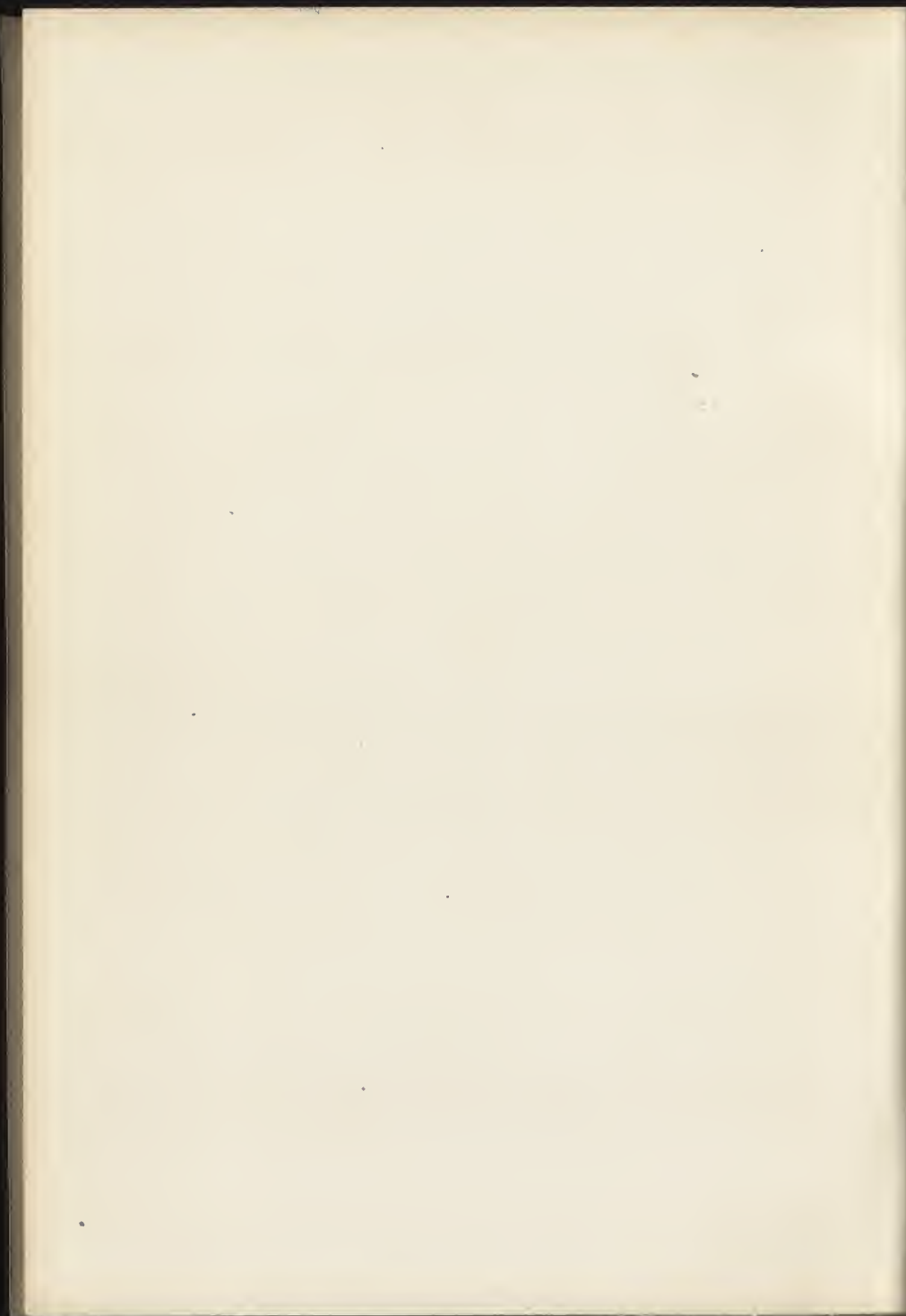
The *Io* is perhaps more easily separable from this Renaissance treatment than any other contemporary work. It is more Greek, though we cannot be sure that Greek painting could ever have afforded a parallel to it. It is classical by the direct single-mindedness of its approach, by its perfect absorption in its own intent; it brings with it nothing that belongs to another mood. We need not praise it because it either conserves or rejects any echoes of actual classical proportions or relics garrulous of the past. Many and many a picture, from Mantegna to Poussin, has more particular echoes in it, and at the same time remains more obviously alien to Greek taste. The *Io* is Greek by felicity, not through study or intent.

Perhaps the mere fact that we realise how near to Greek feeling the *Io* comes, makes us inclined to be unjust to works which remind us that Ovid seemed the most delightful classic to the age that produced them. To approach the Greeks is not an end in itself, unless we idealise them; and no ideal is applicable to a particular work in a manner that excludes all others. Michael Angelo is more classical than any Greek: yet he is often Greek in the same sense, if not to the same degree, as Correggio's *Io*: while again he is often barbarously alien to their spirit. Those are pedants and purists who think that a living work may be so purged and separated as to belong wholly to a particular time. The work of the moment is dead the moment after; if it despised yesterday, to-morrow spues it out of its mouth. The Renaissance brought its labours of love to Ovid, we take ours to



*Hans Makart*

LEDA, BERLIN GALLERY



Euripides: yet even for them Ovid was not Homer, nor is Euripides Æschylus to us.

## IV

When one allows the mind to contemplate Correggio's *Antiope*, what is it that one experiences? What was Rembrandt's experience, when all at once he beheld in this picture the work of an Italian who, as Mr. Strong says, "though he died in 1534, would have had nothing to learn from either Rembrandt or Velasquez?"

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak of Darien.

In this picture Rembrandt would have seen the softness, the insidious grace that he had often mocked at whenaped by Dutchmen who had been in Italy, united with that fulness, breadth, and vigour of conception and execution which he had believed opposed to it. He would have noted with a strange emotion a much rarer quality yet, and one in which he himself is a supreme master,—namely, the power not only of regarding light as a means of expression rather than as an object to be expressed, but of treating accidents and individual peculiarities of form in the same way, so as to convey a racy intimacy.

In this light he would have taken the strange effects foreshortening insisted on in the Cupid, and to some extent in the central figure, and a certain billowy suavity imparted to the outlines,—much as any rapid draughtsman allows

the nature of the forms he expresses to catch some general characteristic from the nature of the stroke native to the material in which he works ; such expressive freedoms being usually limited and restrained in elaborate works, and still more rarely harmonised with and employed for the general effect intended. This power is supremely evident in the drawing for *Antiope* at Windsor, but it is far more rarely employed in the picture, and, indeed, is a growing element in all Correggio's best work, appearing as early as the *Punishment of Juno* and the *Three Graces* of the Camera, As by his use of light and shade, so by his employment of form and substance, he proves himself a great imaginative painter, a true fellow of Rembrandt, though he employs his power in quite a different emotional world. Correggio in his later works regards the figure less and less as an object which it is the aim of his art to express, than as itself a means of expression.

This is less evident, though not less true, in regard to the *Io* and the *Ganymede* than it is in regard to the *Antiope* and the *Allegory of Vice*. The *Io*, indeed, unites both ideas, because he chose to make most perfect forms therein most perfectly explicit ; but any one who contrasts the character of her outline and silhouette with that of the *Venus* in *Cupid's Reading Lesson*, or that of the *Juno Punished* in one of the lunettes of the Camera, will be able to grasp the growth and the nature of this imaginative power.

His frescoes no doubt taught Correggio to rely on this means of expression. In them—in the Cathedral dome above all—he realised so supremely that every figure, whatever its individual character, was to aid in expressing the rapture of an ascension into heaven, that he sacrificed not only the Apostles (for whom he cared little), but his young-



eyed cherubim—at least, in so far as the harmony of their individual proportions is concerned—to the exigencies of the forced perspective necessary to express an upward vortex. He might be said to have achieved a greater emotional and imaginative unity than even Michael Angelo: though Michael Angelo's ceiling, which is not defective in imaginative and emotional unity, is like a vision the substance of every part of which is thought, genius, and physical nobility, compared with a vision the substance of which is a whirlwind of youthful giddiness, setting in motion theatrical draperies, candelabras, and many objects and persons in themselves of small account, though itself embodied among these things in forms as young and happy as they are free from reflection or responsibility.

It was after he had thus schooled himself to be ready to sacrifice the beauty of the objects he represented to the beauty of his creation as a whole, that he painted Antiope, stunted by perspective, visibly asleep, breathing heavily. She is a bodily presence divine by no difference, no rarity of proportion or symmetry, but because the powers of life, of light, of sex, of sleep combine against the mystery of darkness and lust to weave that so potent spell—that command to our common human nature to bate its breath and listen to the beating of its own heart (*see* illustration facing p. 206).

Then to Rembrandt's eye, what an endorsement of his conviction of mastery must the workmanship of this painting have been! At once more varied in method and more homogeneous in effect than his own work; less forceful, less violent, and more commanding. From the transparent deeps in the foliage and the treatment of the leaves against the sky, to the warm glazes absorbing all

local colour, spread over the opaque grisaille painting of the foreground, how he would overpeer every inch with the delightful comprehension of a fellow workman! Then the mystery of that flesh! What speculations it would raise in him as to the kind of "wet neutral ground" it was painted into, and the semi-transparent glazes which afterwards wedded those shadows to the light!

For those who are English, it will be interesting to note the development from this treatment of the foliage against the sky in ETTY's fine diploma picture of a similar subject, and from that again in several of WATTS's backgrounds. For REMBRANDT, probably neither the appearance of exaggeration caused by the arrangement of Cupid's wings and his somewhat forced foreshortening, nor the Ovidian tenour of the sentiment, constituted any kind of let; he accepted them as natural beauties, and was as pleased as ever he had been in his life. Possibly his magnificent etching of the same subject is the record of that inspiring moment, by which he proved to himself that with a coarse and ugly model he could produce as powerful a pictorial effect, as powerful an emotional symphony, out of the harmony of light and vigour with sleep and sex, as could a far-famed Italian master.

## V

I will here quote a most interesting passage by ARTHUR STRONG.

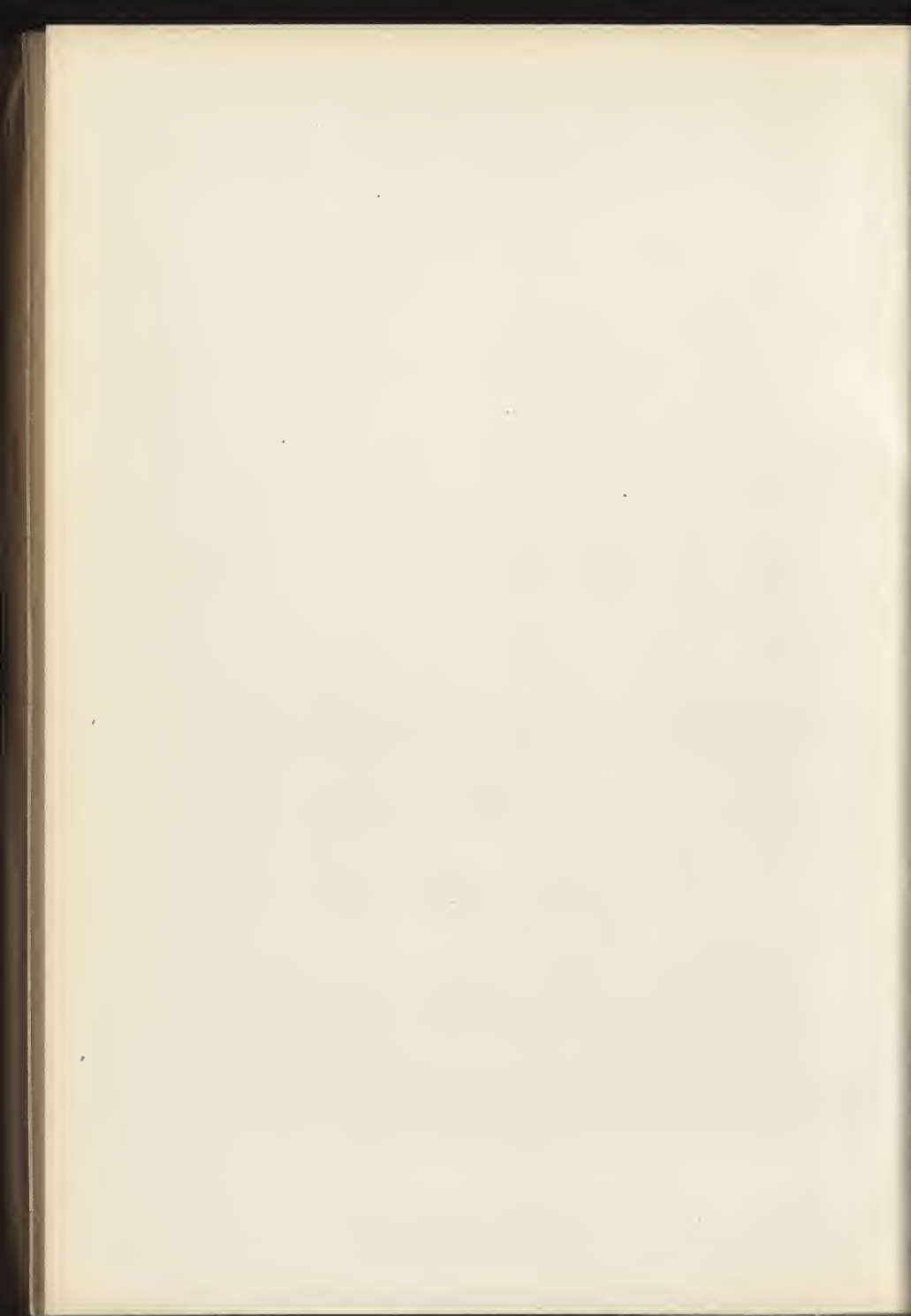
But, as in the case of MOZART's music, so direct and irresistible is our response to CORREGGIO's emotional appeal, that we sometimes allow the depth of his artistry to escape us. We doubt the potency of the charm; we doubt even if there be anything in it at all—until we see it work in the votaries of the



*Alinari*

MADONNA DELLA SCODELLA (RETURN FROM EGYPT)  
PARMA GALLERY

*Face p. 198*



enchanter. Moreover, we are not dealing now with a message half uttered, or a problem half solved, such as Giorgione and Leonardo left behind them to tickle the ingenuity of three centuries of critics. A perfect type in art, no less than the solution of a problem in science, while it bears the stamp of its creator's mind, detaches itself from his personality like a living thing. From being in correspondence with reality it comes as it were to mate and mingle with it.

We shall perhaps make this point clearer if we examine and compare our impressions of two well-known pictures in the Louvre—the *Fête Champêtre* of Giorgione and Correggio's *Antiope*. We can well believe, in fact we can see, as we watch the *Fête* from this distance of time, that those who heard understood that "ancient melody of an inward agony," that low fluting in the hot, still air, winding like a silver thread in and out, in and out, of the measured melancholy chords of the viol, and dying at last in the agony of unison; but it is in vain that we break the stillness now with our critical conjectures as to what manner of man the artist was, and what he could have meant. But with the *Antiope* we are on a different footing. She is something more than a shadow cast by her creator's "short candle." That only which is perfect is real; but that which is real is immortal, and *Antiope* so far has certainly not neglected the opportunities of immortality. We have seen her as a royal concubine, bending from a bank of clouds to crown a florid captain introduced by Mars and supported by Minerva; or, again, when she changes her apparel, if not her profession, and poses as a Magdalene, with book and skull in the shelter, though not too far in the shade, of a leafy cavern. It is the same with Correggio's angels. They can no more be confined within the dome at Parma than a swarm of bees in a hive; their playful roguery makes an easy conquest of child-loving Sir Joshua, and they gambol upon the ceilings of ducal halls and chapels—"where sprawl the saints of Verrio and Laguerre."

## VI

*Cupid's Reading Lesson* is certainly an earlier work than the *Antiope*, yet I cannot understand the conventional date for this picture much better than that for the latter. I fail altogether to see the resemblance in type which Signor Ricci notes between the Venus and the Diana of the Camera. The variety and richness of the pigment would seem to place it near such pictures as the Louvre *Marriage of St. Catherine* and *Il Giorno*, and I note that the type of Cupid agrees better with the children in this last picture than with any others; it is certainly later than that of the children in the Camera or in St. Giovanni.

The Ovidian character of the invention is creative, as in Marlowe's description of Hero's boots, though without the luxuriant extravagance of the English poet. Hermes' helmet and sandals seem to me more closely related to like ornaments in the *Allegory of Virtue* than are the wings of Venus to those of the Fates in the Camera. There is evidence of the direct study of some antique torso in the upright figure, and also in the drawing of limbs and extremities—a presage of that flowing refinement that finds its perfect expression in the *Io*, but which is already decided in *Il Giorno*. The Cupid also is no longer half a convention, but wholly Correggio's invention, with his half-callow wings and their most felicitous articulation with the shoulders, and with that maze of silky curls that covers his head, painted as Vasari well said no other painter ever did or could. The picture has probably been over-cleaned, and so lost its most delicate glazes; perhaps the greenness of the gloom behind disappeared in this way. Signor Ricci

imagines the background to have darkened ; but perhaps, actually painting into a black ground, the watchful master left the picture more as we see it than our ingenious critics, supposing him to pursue a more habitual and less inventive course, imagine. It has been obviously patched here and there, but remains a most brilliant and delightful piece of painting, the brush work and pigment of which present, perhaps, more variety than any other of the master's works ; parts approaching at the same time nearer to the manner of Rembrandt than any part of the *Antiope* even. The strange fancy which gives this Venus wings large as an angel's, but coloured, is the more surprising in an artist whose angels are almost without exception wingless (*see* illustration facing p. 178).

## VII

. . . Correggio, the great technical genius of Italy, the only Italian who, though he died in 1534, would have had nothing to learn from either Rembrandt or Velasquez. Nor is this all, for technically the most modern, he is also the most Greek. Whereas others make occasional visits only to the shrine of beauty, and live upon partial memories, he seems to have worked from first to last full in the presence of the divine idea ; *τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο οὐ δὴ ἕνεκα καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν*. By the side of the *Education of Cupid*, in which the forms seem to be moulded by the light which plays over and about them, the best of Titian and the best of Rubens would look oily and yellow. Before the little *Madonna and Child*, at once so subtle and spontaneous, we think of what Reynolds said of him : "If I had not seen it done by Correggio, I should have taken it to be impossible."

So wrote Arthur Strong : and assuredly I would not have made such statements even had I been able so to

express them. The assertion that Correggio had nothing to learn from Rembrandt and Velasquez, and still more that about Titian and Rubens, does not recommend itself to calm reflection. And yet its bold exaggeration is, I recognise, able to convey a certain truth which it had been very difficult to express without such a licentious use of unwarrantable assertions. How could any one else have nothing to learn from Rembrandt, the magician for whom truth and light were as much means of expression as forms or words? Correggio nothing to learn from such a picture as the *Good Samaritan* in the Louvre! Why, he would have had to be born again, before he could have imagined the possibility of such an excellence;—he with his appreciation of conventionality, his Greek sense for beauty in the object. And then Velasquez, the portrait painter the least complex of great masters—if Correggio is modern as Velasquez is occasionally modern, his modernity itself is ingenious and elaborate and theatrical; three adjectives which never apply to Velasquez, either when he is a great master or the first of the empty-minded. It is not the one touch of nature which makes these giants kin. And yet it is true that Rembrandt and Correggio have treated light and shadow with more freedom and variety than perhaps any other painters; and this freedom and resourcefulness in both seems connected with the fact that they recognise light and shadow frankly as a means of expression rather than as things to be expressed. In this they stand at the opposite pole to modern impressionists and luminarists or any other *ists*; and are creators not imitative artists. And it is true that Velasquez and Correggio alone among the greatest masters have that simple, direct, French (and





*Hans Holbein*

THE MADONNA AND ST. GEORGE. 1530-31  
DRESDEN GALLERY

*Face p. 202*



(therefore modern) appeal to mere intelligence, to the ordinary common-sense mind, which gives to civilised and cultured individuals a certain feeling of reliability, such as Michael Angelo and Rembrandt wholly fail to give, and Titian and Rubens give much less fully and uniformly. For modern culture has come unanimously to recognise this ordinary average intelligence as the basis of actual politics, in contradistinction to politics based on privileged classes like those of the mediæval and ancient worlds: we are rational. Velasquez is cold towards his aristocrats, and only enhances their outward appearance; he never adds that intense inward imaginative sympathy with which Titian makes us friendly to Charles V. or compassionate towards Philip. Only once or twice does he show this kind of power: once when he represents the sensual, intelligent, masterful and vulgar Pope Paul III., and once when treating a lady with a fan—possibly a female friend—or again perhaps in his dwarfs: cases where the objects are such as appeal to the limited imaginations of worldly people to-day. Correggio treats his religious paraphernalia in the same sense rationally: he does not seem to be awed by them as Raphael even may be suspected of being; these are obviously properties for him, but used intelligently as they might be in a fashionable Romish Church to-day—used with gay urbanity and kindly courtesy, as a Jesuit preacher uses Christian mythology and theological dogma—as one who makes the best of what, in the bottom of his soul, he perhaps considers a bad job. And it is this rational, direct way of addressing himself to painting that explains, I feel, Strong's reference to Titian and Rubens as more "oily." Correggio's tendency is like Velasquez' in regard to technical processes too, which for both are always

becoming more simple, more direct; are regarded less and less for their own sakes, more and more as means of expression. Both approach constantly a prose style, like literary artists who were poets in their youth, or at least wrote verses, but find themselves in prose at last. Though Correggio remains a poet to the end, yet his latter manner has many of the qualities of good prose,—as there is a poetry intensely poetical in its substance, but only rhythmically to be distinguished from prose in its expression.

In reading Strong's notes on pictures one is always coming across these bold, paradoxical assertions, which are direct appeals to people with minds already saturated with special knowledge of the subject and familiar with general ideas and results, who alone can complete and relate them.

### VIII

The *Leda* and the *Danae* are obviously less happy in their inspiration. The *Leda*, treating perhaps the most lovely myth of its kind, is now a wreck beyond recognition; the faces of the principal figure and of her nurse have been cut out and replaced by two made in Germany, and over-cleaning has impoverished the remainder. It is almost as far from being itself as the *Leda* of Michael Angelo, which official timidity still confines to the dungeons of the National Gallery. However, the composition is there, and leaves no room to doubt but that Correggio was here less happily inspired. I should imagine it to have been the latest executed of the three pictures painted after the Cathedral was finished, and, as is supposed, commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga as gifts for Charles V. It is

over-elaborated, as the later religious pictures became. Correggio's skill and fertility have run away with him; he no longer approaches his subject with sufficient directness. The general map of the picture reminds one of modern French neo-classicism. To those who are supremely moved by the *Io*, it is a great sadness to have to recognise that Correggio failed to realise this yet more splendid opportunity of doing what he of all men alone might have hoped to do. In the central group he has but little of the directness of Michael Angelo's splendid conception, and this group is the centre of a busy scene quite out of harmony with the intimacy of the myth. That the forest should be there no one could resent; but what business has this Cupid with his musical amorini? Why this reduplication of the swan? and why those other nymphs, whose attractions have rivalled Leda's in their effect upon as amorous birds? Why on earth the duenna, the chaperone, the nurse? The landscape was probably once delightful, and the whole picture suavely gay and amusing: that is the most one can say. There is no coarseness, no directly seductive intention; but neither is there passion nor depth nor power (*see* illustrations facing pp. 190 and 194).

If the *Danae* fails less markedly, and is also less ruined, still it fails and is damaged.\* The motive of light and

\* This picture shows three bad horizontal lines of repainted damage. One passes just under Danae's breasts; the second extends across the bottom of the window-glimpse and along the top of the thigh of Cupid's folded leg, and thence into the white drapery, all of which has been badly flayed and patched. Lastly, from the level with the shoulders of the two cherubs to the bottom of the frame, the painting, if not the canvas, would seem to have been much frayed and broken. The bed between the cherubs' heads is badly patched; and again, between them and Danae's lower foot, and to some extent beyond this again. The background against the outline of Danae's head and

heat as the compelling divinity is hardly more powerfully realised than that of the unruly water-fowl, and in any case cannot be compared with the presentment of the cloud motive in the *Io*. The amorini trying the points of their arrows is a pretty diversion ; the sobriety of the window and glimpse impress. The torso of Danae is divine, but her limbs sprawl, and her smile if innocent is silly. The Cupid who uncovers this dish for the gods seems to expect the power of light and heat as little as the virgin herself. It is a Jesuit version of the Greek myth, with affinities to Racine's sentiment. Had Reynolds composed it, one would have said he came nearer success than in his other efforts to realise the grand style classical. All the eighteenth-century inadequacy for treating such subjects seems foretold in it. It may be as well to remind Mr. Berenson that the author of these pictures played a very different part in the history of art from that played by Keats, though it be true that Keats himself never came so near to the spirit of a Greek myth as the *Io* comes ; his failure in *Endymion* and *Hyperion* is of quite another kind to that of Correggio in the *Leda* and the *Danae*.

It is necessary to distinguish between the spirits which produce the effects of works of art. And these distinctions are more difficult to seize and express than those which Matthew Arnold showed such genius in making apparent in regard to poetic style : and even so he did far less in this way than he felt himself capable of doing, than he set

shoulders has been gone over in order to cut them out. There is an isolated patch against the frame high up in the sky ; another against a bedpost under Cupid, and a third over the lower edge of the further lobe of cloud where it cuts the curtain folds. Besides all this there is much small tinkering ; Danae's foot, the knee of Cupid's straight leg, the cherubs' arms and loins, etc.



ANTIOPE WITH CUPID AND JOVE DISGUISED AS A  
SATYR. LOUVRE





out with the intention of doing. He realised at the outset that he must educate his public; and though he effected wonders, so that almost all current criticism may be traced to a misapprehension of his method and its application, still when he died he was without a public capable of understanding the better part of what he had to say. What an infant-school then must current art criticism be, which has not even learned those simple but difficult lessons which he succeeded in giving, or the equivalent of them! Information in these matters has so immensely outstripped critical development that our savants have not yet passed through their Kindergarten stage.

## IX

Right at the end of his career, Correggio painted two allegorical compositions in tempera. They are generally entitled *Vice* and *Virtue*. These two pictures are described in an inventory made of the treasures of Isabella d'Este's "Grotta," or bower, in 1642, and were probably commissioned by her, as she set Costa and Mantegna to work on similar allegories, overseeing and controlling their inventions.

Two pictures by the entrance door, from the hand of the late Antonio da Correggio, one of which represents the story of Apollo and Marsyas, the other the three virtues, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude, teaching a child to measure time, in order that he may win the palm and be crowned with the laurel.

Such work must have been far less congenial to Correggio than to Mantegna; still, for a man of his ingenious inventiveness, it presented no difficulties such as put the

slow-brained Costa quite out. The first picture, in a lovely landscape, where arabesques of luxuriant foliage remind us of Titian at his best, introduces us to a man tortured by three females, one of whom flays his leg, a second binds his arm with serpents, while a third plays a scannel pipe into his ear. The scene recalls the *Flaying of Marsyas*, and has been explained. Probably the literary intentions furnished to the artist would be as little satisfactory, were they known, as are the explanations. The composition is rich and harmonious as light and shade, and the workmanship extremely fluent and effective. It has a caligraphic monotony in complete contrast to the richness and variety of such pictures as the *Antiope* and *Cupid's Reading Lesson*, which carries yet further the tendency to seek simplicity in process as well as in design that is abundantly evident in the *Io* and the *Ganymede*. The companion picture is less fortunate in the elements of which it is composed, but equally brilliant, easy and skilful. Some of the heads are of great beauty and elegance, and there is a buoyancy about the whole thing as enchanting as it is inimitable (*see* illustrations facing pp. 210 and 214).

An unfinished replica of this last painting is hung too high to be properly examined in the Doria Gallery at Rome. Two of the figures, which are draped in the original, are represented nude: while in the invention of accoutrements and other details, it departs from the Louvre picture in a manner very difficult to account for, if we suppose, as Morelli did, that it was a copy commenced for commercial reasons while it was in the hands of the banker Jabach. An artist copying out of admiration may allow himself even stranger licence—as we see in some

of Rubens' copies. There will seem on the whole, perhaps, a balance of probabilities in favour of this replica having been made by Baroccio, rather than by an unnameable French artist of a period which did not produce any whose method of work was analogous.





*Giraudon*

ALLEGORY OF VIRTUE. LOUVRE

*Face p. 210*



PART VI

DRAWINGS





## CHAPTER I

### THEIR NATURE

#### I

THERE are two distinct general purposes which may be served by drawing: the lines or blots may be used to explain the nature of the object represented, or they may be used to transform our idea of it.

The drawing which a schoolboy makes of an Indian by means of round dots and straight lines is a very simple explanatory drawing. Most life studies and academical pictures are explanatory. The correctness or incorrectness of the information conveyed by an explanatory drawing does not affect the purpose of the draughtsman. The schoolboy's hieroglyph exists merely to explain what object he has in view, and so it is with an academy life study.

The most familiar example of the drawing which exists to transform our idea of the object represented is a caricature: its most developed form, perhaps, a drawing by Michael Angelo or Rembrandt. The caricature takes advantage of the fact that a very trifling amount of explanatory information will suffice to make us recognise the object, in order to add wilfully false items to it, with the intent of fixing our attention on some one of its aspects

or features, and thereby bringing us to share some personal fancy or impression originally suggested to the caricaturist's mind by the object. It appeals to imagination, like a fairyland which enchants us both by its likeness and its unlikenesses to the actual world. Of course the success of the transformation is dependent upon our willingness to entertain it.

In the second of these two main purposes of draughtsmen the first is included. A transformative drawing cannot consist entirely of items which convey no information about the real world. Its object must be recognisable. However, the distinction does not lie in the mere falseness of the information conveyed. Explanatory drawings which exist merely to convey information often lie, and are always inexact or incomplete. The distinction lies in the purpose of the artist who wilfully transforms, distorts, adds, or omits, in order to produce an effect on the mind he addresses. Purposeless transformations must depend wholly on the spectator for any chance success they may have. Purposed transformations depend for their success on the solidarity which is known to exist between human minds and human perceptions.

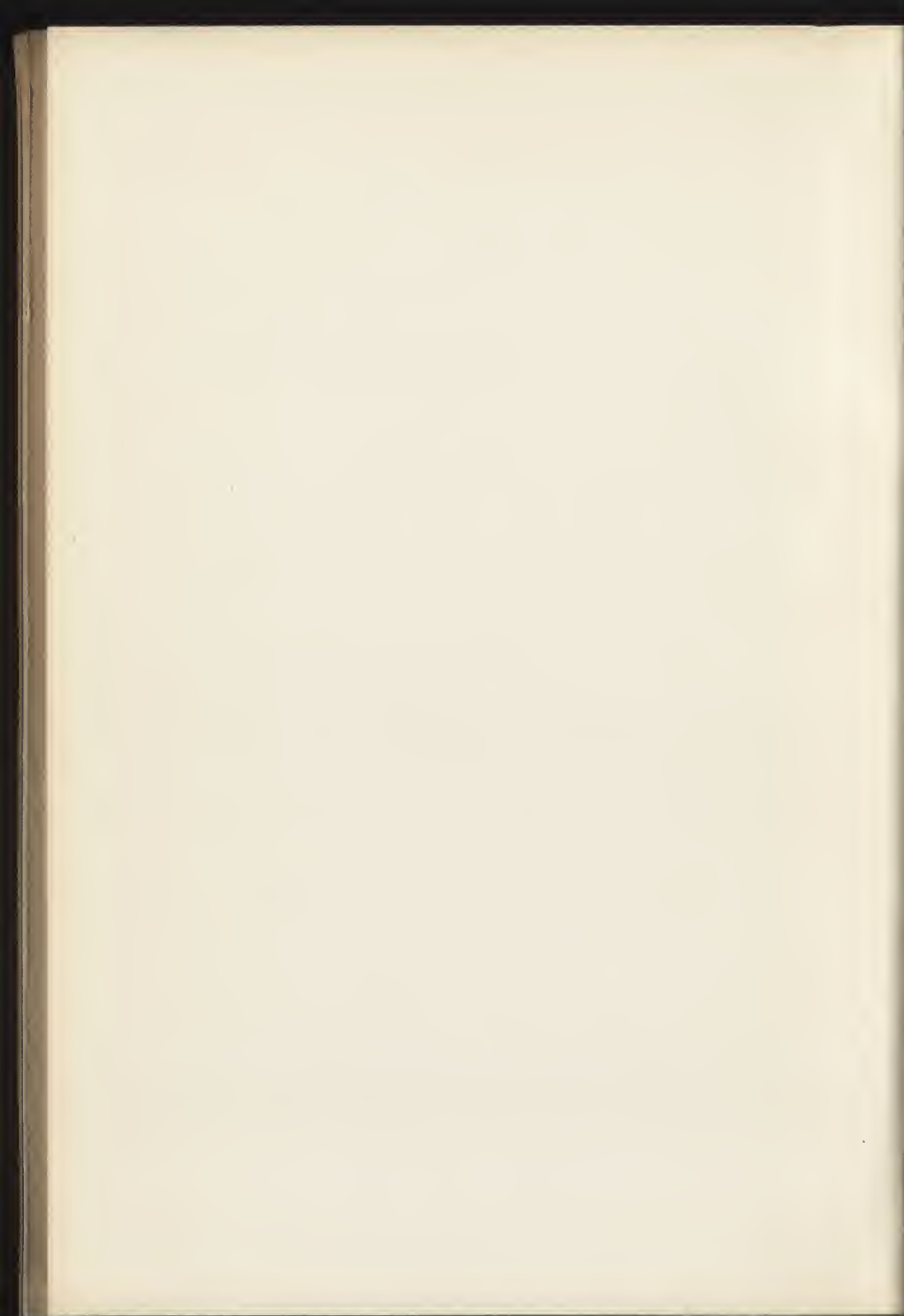
In proportion as an artist is either fine or subtle in his perception of objects his earliest drawings are likely to be rather explanatory than creative. If he is intent on selecting and insisting on delicate suggestions of beauty he will feel the necessity of making the object not only recognisable but lifelike, so that the subtle transformations which he will be prompted by his choicefulness to operate may produce their effect, and not be lost in a confusion of vague and unconvincing traits. The man who starts out as a caricaturist is likely to remain one.



*Giraudon*

ALLEGORY OF VICE. LOUVRE

*Face p. 214*



The old masters had one great advantage in the traditions they inherited. These traditional forms stood for adequate representations of nature, they passed current for complete information. Though they were really comparatively simple symbols of it, they could be studied and mastered far more easily than the object itself. And when mastered they could be added to or varied from with the same effectiveness as if they had been the most elaborate representations of nature.

## II

Among Correggio's drawings, if we take the sheet of pen-sketches B 290 (*see* illustration facing p. 222) it is not difficult imaginatively to follow the use of line backwards through such drawings as the *Coronation of St. Catherine* and those allied to it in the Print Room of the British Museum, till we come to the drawing at Windsor, Braun No. 136, by Cesare da Sesto, once attributed to Correggio, and thence to Leonardo and the Florentine tradition. The drawing of an *Adoration of the Kings* (at Wilton) may not improbably represent for us what Correggio's work in chalk was like before he studied the Florentine tradition in Cesare da Sesto's work.

In the sheet of pen-drawings B 290 the use of the sinuous outline, and even more that of the curved lines which represent the roundness of forms bulging towards the spectator, is as definitely explanatory in its origin and character as the same kind of stroke is in a pen-drawing by Verrochio. This is most evident in the figures of the children. On the other hand, if we take the figure of St. Anne with the distaff we find a definitely purposeful

or creative accent, and in the angel youth leaning on his elbows sketched above the Virgin's head we are struck by a definite resemblance to Rembrandt. It tells us far more about how the angel feels, and how readily Correggio sympathised with him, than it tells us about the shape of his limbs, features, &c. From this figure we can go straight to one of Correggio's latest and most beautiful drawings, the *Sleeping Antiope*, B 132, at Windsor, in which the feminine forms, heavy like those of a drowsy white cloud, become intimately expressive of a mood which sympathises with and imaginatively enacts sensations such as a midsummer night's torpor would beget in such a form. The intimacy and rich ease of such a drawing might even be preferred as expression to the masterpiece in the Louvre itself. The picture has to harmonise so many elements that are not essential to the creamy flow of the mood, and which are with difficulty prevented from disturbing it. Despite its greater distinctness and more imposing presence the picture hardly holds its own in our affection against the easy intimate felicity of the drawing (*see* illustration facing p. 246).

In the same way the magnificent drawing, *An Apostle*, B 298 (*see* illustration facing p. 230) is a more poetical, a more dramatic creation than any of the Apostles actually frescoed in the Cathedral dome. It is more explanatory than the Windsor *Antiope*, but is instinct with purpose and transforming power in a higher and more genuine mood than any painted saint or apostle by Correggio.

So again is the figure of the Virgin, B 445 (*see* illustration facing p. 226), of far richer felicity than the fragment of fresco in the Parma Library, for which it is a study. The spontaneous flow and naivety of the movement were lost in

the elaborated work. Doubtless the drawing for the *Annunciation* is in the same way more powerful and expressive than the forms which are now all but obliterated from the plaster in the Parma Gallery ever were. Whatever the harmonies of colour and elaboration may have been we may be sure that they had not the rush and inspiration of this drawing. Begun in chalk, it has been finished in black and white body-colour. It glows with the successive heats through which it was elaborated, and each new felicity retains something of those which were buried beneath it. It is one of some dozen more or less of the same kind, which once formed, doubtless, a far more numerous class.

### III

The way in which Correggio is thus seen to have developed a kind of painting on paper by means of chalk point, pen and bistre and camel-hair brush, not excluding smudge or wash, is very significant. Michael Angelo developed from the same method of using line (which had, of course, been in the hands of their respective forerunners in varying degrees both explanatory and creative) in quite a different direction. The beauty he conceived was intimately inspired by familiarity with the structure and articulation of the human body, and, of course, required a much more elaborate explanatory basis than the emotional aspects of beautiful limbs and their undulating soft and delicious substance, from which Correggio drew the inspiration which led him to study passionately.

A third and quite distinct inspiration and direction of development is illustrated in Rembrandt's drawings. For

him everything is an expression of or to the soul : sympathy is all in all : not only horror, uncouthness, and squalor are melted into a tender compassion pervasive and searching as the gentleness of light itself, but admiration, awe, and contemplation, the sources of the Italian inspiration, are made so intimate and personal as to seem no longer due to a revelation but to be an emanation from the individual, the artist. Michael Angelo found the forms of his statues in the stone ; he said that he felt the crude block shudder at his approach, as though the form he would elicit from it were already conscious within it. With Rembrandt the feeling to be aroused is beautiful, no matter how ugly or common the object to be represented : he seeks beauty in the person addressed, not in the object presented. He drapes reality with his wealth of emotion, and every object he represents, from light itself to a carcase in a butcher's shop, is used as a means of expression, a word ;—having little or no value in itself, but important as expressing the thought or thoughtlessness of the suffering actors in the human tragedy, which was for him always going forward on the sad stage of an habitual dream. He is more intent on appealing to his audience than on representing his object ; or rather his object does not exist for him apart from the mood which transforms it.

Correggio's development is between the great Dutchman's and the great Florentine's, and is equally distinct from either. The sensuous beatitude and plastic agreeableness of his normal power are occasionally transcended in these best drawings by a scintillation of Rembrandtesque drama, as in the *Apostle* at Vienna, or of Rembrandtesque intimacy as in the *Eve* (see illustrations facing pp. 226 and 230), or the *Antiope* (see illustration





ST. JOSEPH. FROM OLD ENGRAVING AFTER LOST PICTURE



ST. JEROME. FROM OLD ENGRAVING AFTER LOST PICTURE

*Face p. 218*



facing p. 246): but towards the energetic moods of the Florentine adorer of that creator of noble bodies for noble minds, who made the world which Satan marred, he never rises.

## IV

Correggio's drawings and sketches of whole compositions evince something of that delight in the possibilities of spacing and arrangement of which the drawings of Rembrandt are the supreme examples. Here I may quote some excellent remarks of Arthur Strong's.

This drawing, and the earlier sketch at the British Museum, combine to show the care which the painter took to comprehend and realise to the full the possibilities of his theme. The tone of our drawing is more formal and classical, while the treatment at the British Museum is more familiar and rustic. In the present case the painter is more concerned with the combination and the balance of lines; in the other he is dealing mainly with that problem of illumination of which *La Notte* was to give the cardinal and unapproachable solution. In the picture there is less of empty space than in our sketch; the components of the group are drawn in more closely to the radiant point or focus; but, on the whole, the painter has kept to the general scheme as we have it here.

Reference may be made here to p. 145, and the conditions set by the commission for this picture, which may very well have led to the design being more than usually hesitated over and rehandled time after time. About the drawing for the figure of *Eve* (see illustration facing p. 226) Strong made the following interesting suggestion:

On the left of the figure of *Eve* there is a cherub's head slightly sketched, and of that type which Correggio created,

and which influenced Reynolds so profoundly in his conception and representation of children. In fact, we are almost tempted to believe that in this very drawing—which came from the collection of Reynolds—we may have the germ, as it were, of *Puck*, *Cupid as a Link-boy*, and *Robinetta*.

## CHAPTER II

### THEIR AUTHENTICITY

#### I

“If you want to know the defects of your pictures,” said West on one occasion, “set somebody to copy them”; and the zeal with which the Carracci and their school multiplied drawings after, or in the style of, Correggio has certainly not tended to enhance his reputation. Not only are Bolognese school-copies of the principal groups in the Parma frescoes generally attributed to Correggio himself; but the original figure-studies of Annibale and his pupils, being executed in the same way, have naturally come to be included in the same category. These latter can easily be recognised, for indeed there is scarcely a collection which does not boast one or more of them. They exhibit the vulgar types for which the Carracci seem to have had a predilection; the forms are vigorously outlined, but somewhat coarsely and sparsely shaded with horizontal strokes.

STRONG.—“Critical Studies and Fragments,” p. 41.

A CONCLUSION as to the genuineness of Correggio's drawings, as in the case of that of most others, is arrived at solely by consideration of internal evidence, and internal evidence is always inconclusive. However, internal evidence does beget tremendous convictions, and even convictions which approach universality,—that is which impose themselves on every one who is brought face to face with

the facts. We may perhaps assume that our conviction of genuineness in regard to Correggio's drawings has this character in thirty cases. These thirty drawings make the first division of my list (*see* Appendix). I have not included drawings attributed to Correggio which are both beautiful and masterly, but which may be recognised as copies after figures in his works by Rubens, Baroccio, Carracci and others.

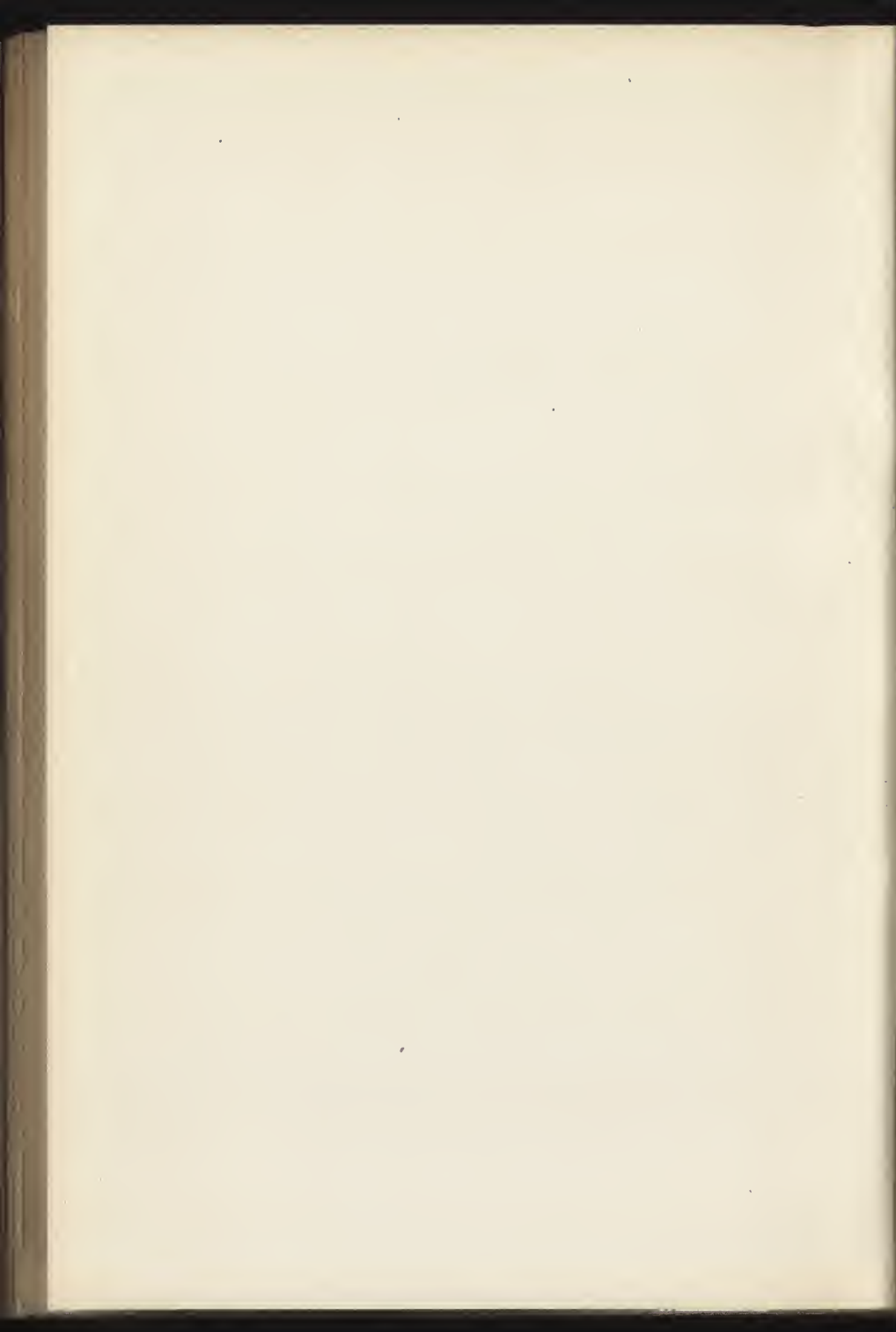
## II

Among the doubtful drawings are some which suggest that they were made by an artist who was in the habit of making show drawings, who was a virtuoso draughtsman : that is, a producer of drawings which were an end in themselves, and not preparatory for some other work of art. No doubt the pleasure an artist naturally would take in employing chalk or pen and ink or bistre and Chinese white would often lead to his giving something of this character to drawings. It has been assumed that Correggio made very few drawings, and if this were so, or if there were really any good ground for assuming it to be so, it would cast a great doubt on certain drawings ascribed to him by Signor Ricci and Doctor Frizzoni, for these drawings imply a great familiarity with the mediums employed, and a great proficiency in controlling them, while the mediums themselves are sufficiently various. However, as far as I can judge, there is no reason for assuming that Correggio was other than a prolific draughtsman, although it is true that the majority of drawings which are now ascribed to him are *bona fide* working drawings ; which fact alone casts a certain shade on drawings which seem to imply virtuoso habits even when



*Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach*

A SHEET OF PEN AND INK SKETCHES. ALBERTINA, VIENNA





the actual drawing is possibly a genuine working drawing, as is the case with certain of those at Chatsworth and with that belonging to the Albasini Scrosati.

### III

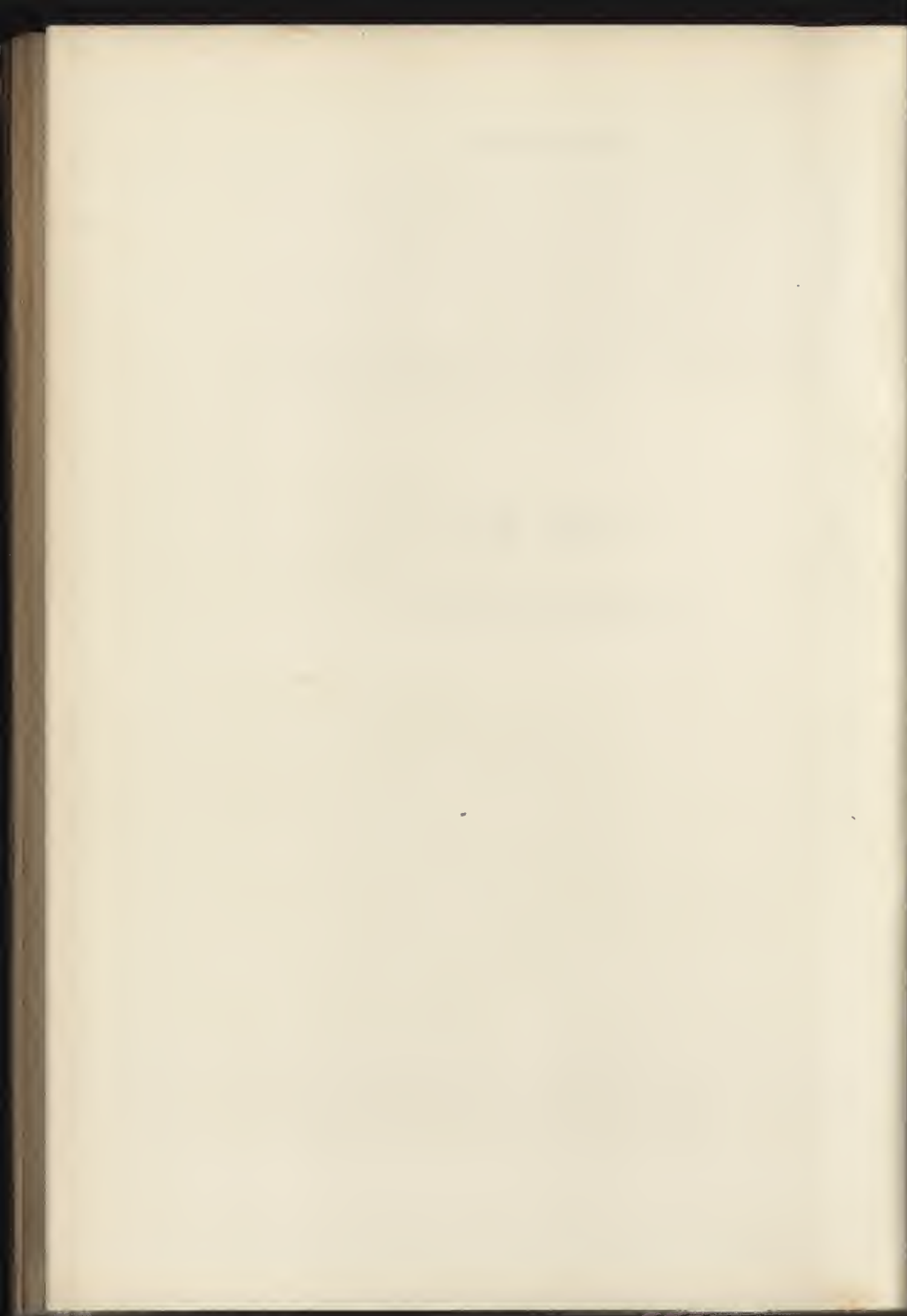
The case in regard to working drawing is as follows. Doubtless ever since beautiful drawings were made they were occasionally treasured not only by the artist and his pupils, but by admirers and friends. Still, when Vasari made his famous collection he was probably in the van of a nascent fashion, which, after his death, and above all in the eighteenth century, attained such proportions that artists existed then whose chief work was to make drawings, either of their own inventions or after those of the great masters, but always with their own method and touch; while all artists began by copying and imitating not only the finished works of former or contemporary masters, but their working drawings and sketches. Though this state of things reached its culminating stage in the eighteenth century, no doubt even in Correggio's lifetime most of the classes of drawings which it produced already existed occasionally. It is quite possible that admirers like Grillenzoni, or fellow artists, begged from Correggio a working drawing which had struck their fancy, and that he, finding them thus appreciated, may have set to work now and again to produce a drawing which he intended to present as a gift of courtesy to a friend or patron, and did not expect to make use of in the production of any of his works. Such drawings might sometimes reproduce, with a fresh accent suitable to the means of expression, some figure in an already completed picture, which had

been especially admired by such a friend or patron. It is even possible that drawings which Correggio kept by him became the object of rival admirations, and were at first jestingly, and afterwards as a matter of course, offered to the highest bidder. If such a practice had thus arisen it might, because unusual, have contributed something to the legend of his miserly propensities. "He even sold his drawings," it may have been said.

# PART VII

## DECEPTIVE DISTANCES

.





STUDY FOR MADONNA IN TRIBUNE OF  
S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA, LOUVRE



STUDY FOR EVE IN THE CATHEDRAL  
DOME, BRITISH MUSEUM

*Face p. 226*



## CHAPTER I

### THE MAN BEHIND THE WORK.

#### I

Antonio Allegri was born at Correggio in the year 1494, eleven years after Raphael, and fourteen after Titian. The date of his birth rests, as a matter of fact, upon the testimony of Vasari, not always a very solid foundation; but such evidence as there is to be gleaned indirectly from other sources rather confirms than discredits what has become the received tradition. For a long time a thick mist of obscurity hung over the outset of the painter's career. By some he was represented as of lowly origin, born into a state of indigence and misery, from which the efforts even of his genius were powerless to extricate him. Others, as is only natural, in the zeal of partisanship, or in the desire to give voice to the *altera pars*, could not refrain from contending that in addition to the high prerogative of natural endowment, Correggio enjoyed the artificial privilege of noble birth.

WITH these sentences that distinguished and deeply-to-be regretted scholar, Arthur Strong, probably set out to record his impression of the man Antonio Allegri. I have looked upon it as a pious duty to embody, in the foregoing chapters, the bulk of the all-too-brief fragments which he left dealing with Correggio's works.

## II

Antonio Allegri was born at Correggio of a solid peasant stock. His father, Pellegrino Allegri, was a victualler and possessed land ; his uncle, Master Lorenzo, had already become a painter. His bringing up was in all probability frugal in the extreme, but free from the restraints of actual want. Signor Ricci has exhaustively searched out his origins and weighed the evidence in regard to his condition ; but the result is of even more meagre significance than the legends and traditions it replaces, though it is doubtless far more trustworthy.

Probably soon after he had made a stir by the production of his *Madonna and St. Francis*, he began to enjoy the patronage of the local princes, the Corregeschi. Signor Ricci has made the most of this probability, and insists that the evidence should make us conclude that he became the friend of his noble employers. We are, I admit, free to suppose that he did so ; but it must be our good will and not the evidence that determines us. " In 1532 he assisted at the drawing up of the act whereby Manfredo appointed Paolo Brunorio his proxy, and empowered him to receive re-investiture on his behalf for all feoffs held by the lords of Correggio under the Emperor Charles V." To be a witness to such a deed at the court of a petty prince may indicate that a man was reckoned of some importance and " a scholar"—as country people say even to-day of those who can read and write with ease,—but assuredly no more than this can be held to be certain. In 1532 Correggio had finished the Cathedral frescoes at Parma, and, apart from all questions



of friendship, must have been a man of mark and importance at the little court. In 1534 he acted as witness "to the settlement of twenty thousand gold scudi on Chiara, daughter of Gianfrancesco of Correggio, on the occasion of her betrothal with Ippolito, son of Giberto and Veronica Gambara." Doubtless this was a family affair; but a witness to such a deed was not necessarily more of an intimate than a witness to the other.

Veronica Gambara, writing to Isabella d'Este in 1528, speaks of "our Antonio"; and it was reckoned as proof of great condescension and affection on the part of Isabella to speak of "our Veronica."\* Now, is it necessary to regard the two employments of this pronoun as carrying the same significance? May not a noble lady speak of the village painter whom she is employing and recommending as "our Antonio," more as she would speak of her lapdog as "our Pompéo," or as she would speak of her cook as "our Zucone," than as a still greater princess might speak of her as "our Veronica," because she condescended to make a friend of her?

I appeal to Signor Ricci, and ask him if he is not in all

\* The passage translated runs as follows. The picture mentioned is entirely lost, no copy or trace of it left; that at Dresden is in no way related to it.

"I should fail in my duty to your Excellency if I did not tell you of the masterpiece of painting which *our* Antonio Allegri has just completed, knowing, as I do, how much pleasure it would give your Highness, who is so excellent a judge of these things. The picture represents the Magdalen in the desert, in a dark cavern, whither she has fled in her penitence. She kneels on the right, lifting clasped hands to heaven and imploring pardon for her sins. Her beautiful attitude, and the expression of deep but noble sorrow on her most lovely face, are so striking that every one who has seen the picture is filled with wonder. In this work the painter has expressed all that is most sublime in the art of which he is so great a master."

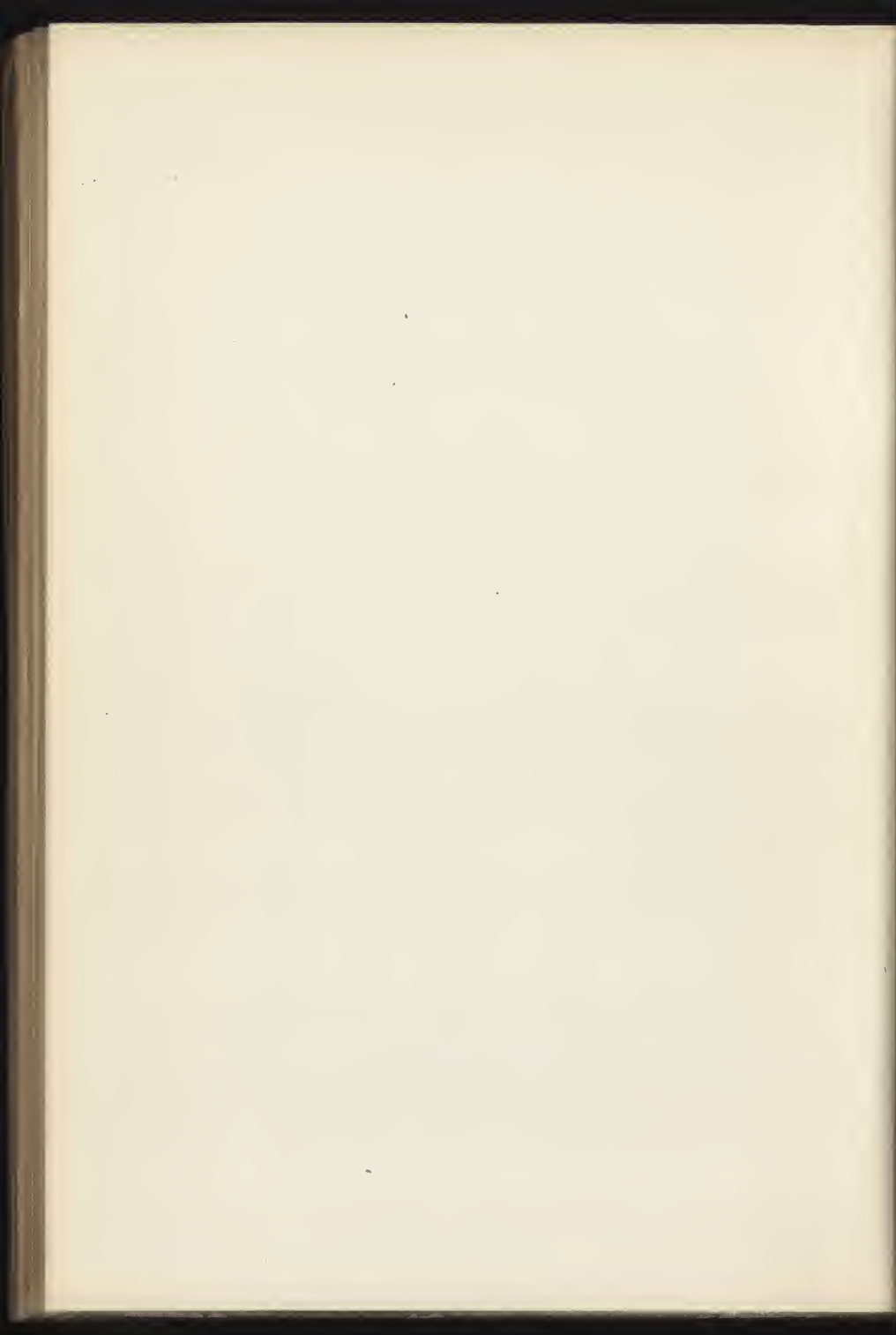
this yielding to a desire to make Correggio a parallel to his great contemporaries in as many ways as possible? Nature abhors a vacuum perhaps; but the man who writes history abhors one certainly. There is an obvious analogy between the productive powers and development of Correggio and those of Michael Angelo, of Raphael, of Titian, &c.; but for my part I cannot imagine Antonio Allegri's bodily presence as creating the same sensation as Buonarotti's, nor as winning the same loving worship as Sanzio's, nor as maintaining its equality with the most powerful, like Titian's. Had he been able to ravish and bewilder like Leonardo, could all trace of his advent and passage have died away in the resonant past? Had he either been feared and adored or loved and adored, how strange the silence both of legend and document that envelops him! That silence first sealed his own lips perhaps. Had the witchery of his best work found expression in the commerce of the man with his fellows,—let the Emilia be as barren in society as in art,—let its princes be as stolid and heavy as the more part of its artists,—and still it would be a kind of miracle had it not preserved to us some written or painted portrait of this Italian who was a Greek,—in whom the most popular worship, the most pervasive sensuous aspirations of his own day and of antiquity found so genial an expression. Praxiteles and Raphael and Giorgione expressed in solos what Correggio melted into choral fusion.

“I also am a painter,” he is reported to have cried on beholding Raphael's *St. Cecilia* at Bologna, whither it came in 1516, about the time when he commenced his *Repose in Egypt*. “I also am a painter;”—tradition perhaps paints him for us in that pathetic cry. “I am



STUDY OF AN APOSTLE FOR BUT NOT USED IN  
CATHEDRAL DOME. ALBERTINA, VIENNA

*Face p. 230*



not what that Raphael is in the society of cardinals and princes; you do not flatter me as you flatter him; but on the canvas I am his fellow." He was right. When Titian stood in the Cathedral he was asked if the canons had not paid too great a price for this work by so simple, so unprepossessing a man; he replied, "Turn it upside down and fill it with golden coins and you will not have paid enough."

An autograph estimate by Correggio is inserted in the contract for these Cathedral frescoes, which was signed November 3, 1522, while he was at work on those for S. Giovanni. It runs as follows (I quote from Ricci):

Having carefully considered the work which your lordships (*i.e.*, the canons Pascasio Beliard and Galeazzo Garimberti, and of Scipione della Rosa, *Equus auratus*, wardens, and thirteen other priests) are pleased to entrust to me, namely, that taking the choir, the cupola, with its arches and great pillars (leaving out the side chapels and going straight to the sanctuary), the frieze, arcade and niche, with its mouldings, and all the wall-space in the chapel down to the pavement, measuring some 150 square perches, I should decorate them with given subjects in imitation of life, or of bronze or marble, as may best accord with the several places, the exigencies of the building, and the beauty and fitness of the paintings themselves; and having calculated that my outlay for gold-leaf, colours, and the final coat of cement on which I shall paint will be 100 ducats, I cannot, having regard to our own honour and that of the place, undertake the work for less than 1000 gold ducats, and the following appliances: (1) scaffoldings; (2) the mortar preparation of the walls; (3) cement for the plastering; (4) a large room, or enclosed chapel, in which to prepare the cartoons.

We note that the figures "1000" are inserted above an

erasure of the original entry, which was 1200 ducats. An employé in a very large business concern once told me that the man among his friends who drew the highest salary used laughingly to say to him : " You will never get a really high screw, because every one who looks at you sees you have no use for it ; while no one who looks at me would dream of offering me anything but a very high figure." Correggio's insistence on " regard for our honour " may as well have been a protest against the effect produced by his appearance, as the redundancy of a man conscious that no one would think of offering him anything but a very high figure. In any case, the wardens successfully beat him down, and, after his death, his heirs were called upon to refund 140 imperial lire, paid for work in the cupola which he had died before completing.

## III

We know nothing for certain about Correggio's character or habits, yet " it is easy to be too sweepingly negative in these matters," just as it has been found " easy also to think we can know more about them, and more certainly than we can." The evidence of his works surely gives us some right to conclude that Correggio enjoyed opportunities of observing the commerce of refined and elegant women among themselves and with their children. It is difficult to pronounce to what class the most typical, the most unique of his Madonnas belonged ; she dips the silver cup and laughs with an exquisite refinement, but such as is a natural gift, and may be found in any class ; yet the Madonnas in the *Marriage of St. Catherine* in the Louvre, and in *Il Giorno*, are as certainly ladies as the Madonna

della Cesta is a woman of like origin with the painter himself. We feel persuaded also that he brooded over whatever refinement he could study, and refined on it, rendering it more nimble, light, and winsome. And when one thinks over Taine's description of Renaissance society, with its physical violence, the zest with which it appreciated horse-play, with its grooms; of the kind of physique that lady had who from a battlemented wall told the butchers of her children that she still possessed the mould in which they had been moulded and could replace them, suiting her gesture to the sense of her vaunt;—when one thinks all this over, and then turns to Correggio's *Il Giorno*, one seems to have traversed more than one century. In the same way, when one turns from reading Burckhardt's chapter on the appreciation of the picturesque in scenery, still so embryonic with Leo X., to Correggio's or Titian's earliest backgrounds, one feels inclined to discredit the acumen of the historian. Doubtless extremes exist side by side in every society: but surely these pictures appealed to a widespread appreciation; surely it was not Correggio alone who could appreciate such a woman as his Madonna in *Il Giorno*, or his *Io*, or those in his *Triumph of Virtue*. Yet no doubt he was in advance of the vanguard in this direction; and that he should have been so constitutes a very important and very delightful trait of character, at least of the inner man.

Signor Ricci rightly gives some weight to Vasari's portrait.

He was of a very timid disposition, and, at great personal inconvenience, worked continually for the family which depended upon him. Although naturally good, he allowed himself to be unreasonably afflicted in resisting those passions

which usually affect men. In art he was very melancholy, enduring its labours, but he never allowed difficulties to deter him, as we see in the great tribune of the Duomo of Parma. . . .

And again :

Indeed, he was a modest man, and felt that he had not mastered his art so thoroughly as he could have desired, for he realised its difficulties. He was content with little, and lived as a good Christian should. Antonio was anxious to save, like every one who is burdened with a family, and he thus became excessively miserly.

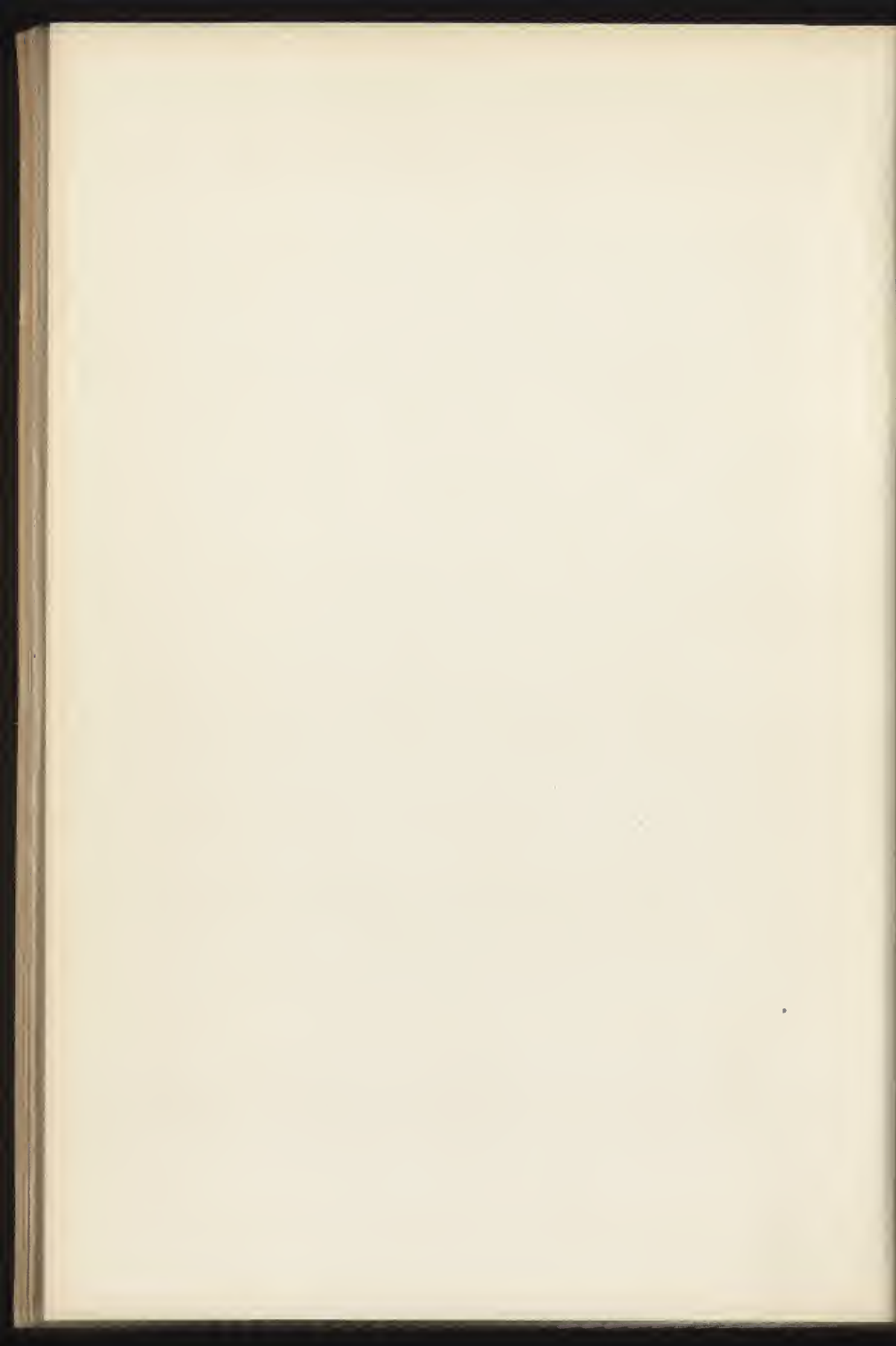
Vasari shows us by his manner that he is making the most of very scanty and indefinite information ; in another place he probably tells us about the chief source from which he drew it—" M. Francesco Grillenzoni, doctor, . . . a great friend of Correggio." This phrase in Ricci is translated "one of Correggio's closest friends." This individual was the head of a large and rich family at Modena, notable for the rare harmony in which it lived. He owned the *Marriage of St. Catherine*, now in the Louvre, and gave Girolamo da Carpi leave to copy it. " I learned all these particulars from Girolamo himself, who was my friend, at Rome in 1850," . . . says Vasari. Now it is quite certain that all this might have been so learned without Grillenzoni having been what we call a friend at all : and Correggio's supposed miserliness may have merely been an explanation of his industry and melancholy, and the fact that nobody seemed to have known him, or even to claim to have known him, save Grillenzoni. People talk very loosely, and report what others say still more loosely. M. Francesco may have said, " I knew him quite well " ; Girolamo, " He was a friend of C.'s " ; Vasari, " A great friend of C.'s " ; Signor Ricci,





*Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach*

GROUP CONTAINING ADAM AND ABRAHAM, FOR THE CATHEDRAL  
DOME, WINDSOR



"One of C.'s closest friends." It is useless to hang much on such a peg. We know by the deed commissioning Correggio to paint *La Notte*, that a spirit very different to friendship in his patrons may often have embarrassed and confined his invention (*see* p. 145). Grillenzoni may even have been no better than Pratonero.

On July 20, 1521, Correggio was made a lay brother by the Benedictines, whose church, San Giovanni Evangelista, he was decorating. Now, if such an affiliation with a monastic brotherhood had implied then what it would imply to-day, we should have some sure ground to go on in estimating Correggio's position with regard to Christianity; but it is certain that it then implied nothing of the sort. Relations of mutual courtesy, or even simply of mutual convenience, enabling the painter to take his meals regularly with his genial employers, may be all that is indicated. So that Vasari's phrase, "He lived as a good Christian should," instead of having its import focussed by this fact, may mean that he was looked on as rather a tame animal.

#### IV

Beyond his work the history of Correggio's life is his signature to a score of legal documents; half of these deal with his own affairs, half with the affairs of others. They prove him to have been trusted and respected.

He was married, and he had children. We know from his will that he cared for both children and wife, as in duty bound; but what sort of a husband or father he was we know as little as we know what sort of a companion he made for Giberto, Manfredo, or Veronica. His son, who was thirteen years old when his father died, became a

painter nonentity ; but it is evident that neither his taking to the profession nor his failure in it can be laid to the door of any lack of foresight or insight in Allegri himself. It would be as hazardous to divine that he was a loving uxorious man and an indulgent father from his art successes with the subject of the Madonna and her Child, as to draw the inference that he was unfaithful and licentious in his sexual relations from his successes with Io, Antiope, or Danae ; or that he indulged perverted inclinations because he triumphs when representing Ganymede or the young-eyed cherubims of the Cathedral. The analogy his creativeness presents to that of Raphael and Buonarrotti might as well be extended to the likelihood of his having had mistresses and yet less avowable loves, as to his having veritably figured largely in the court of the Corregeschi. That he carried in him the potentiality of the most liberal vices, the most generous slips, is evident from the general character of his works ; but it is quite as likely that the forbidding finger of silence touched his lusts as well as his more innocent affections for wife and children, and that he was reserved in all such relations, as that he was a homely saint or a prodigal libertine. We have no reason to suppose that one of these characters would have caused more remark than another in that age and those surroundings. What we know of him most certainly is what I have striven to show in this work : that he was very industrious ; that he was constantly inventive and ingenious both in use of pigment and brush and in the arrangement of colours and forms, of objects and figures ; that he was more intermittently creative, first in landscapes and then in method, and gradually transformed the most likely elements of Christian mythology so that they led him naturally up to the

perfectly Greek sentiment of his *Ganymede* and *Io*; and that his contact with religion was external, but probably grew into an appreciation of those elements which eventually proved most possible and most permanent in the social culture to which he belonged, so that they thrived in it even after the transference of the centre to Paris.

Nothing can be positively asserted of his relations to the art of his period. Mantegna's are the only first-rate works which he certainly saw and studied at first-hand, and their influence has been traced in no fundamental quality of his art. Whether he went to Rome and Florence, or what knowledge of the work being done was brought to him by the drawings and sketches of travelling artists, may be endlessly debated. It is probable that he saw at least two pictures by Raphael and one statue by Michael Angelo, because they came within easy travelling distance of his centres, and it is difficult to imagine that he never went to Rome or Florence.

Though Parma was besieged while he was at work on the frescoes he would appear to have been just then on a visit to his native place; but the whole country was overrun by the mercenary hordes of Charles V.'s army, so that the horrors of war must have been made familiar to his eyes and ears. We know nothing of his political leanings, nothing of his thoughts, nothing of the part he took in the discussions which agitated the culture of his days. He worked hard and well, and died at forty years of age, one of the greatest painters of all time.

I do not dwell on the *milieu* in which he lived. A general idea of what life was in the Italian towns is current: and as we have no means of determining Correggio's relation to its various phases—what he was in court, in church, in

studio, at home, at the barber's or the wine-shops; how he behaved when he travelled, or even where he went—it has seemed better to leave the general picture in everybody's mind as background, rather than to sketch one here. We cannot know Correggio as we know Dürer in relation to the times in which he lived, but only in relation to those whom his works have impressed and in relation to ourselves.

## V

I rage, and weep to think of the fate of this poor Antonio; so great a man—if, indeed, he were not rather an angel in the flesh—to be lost here, to live unknown, and to die unhappily!

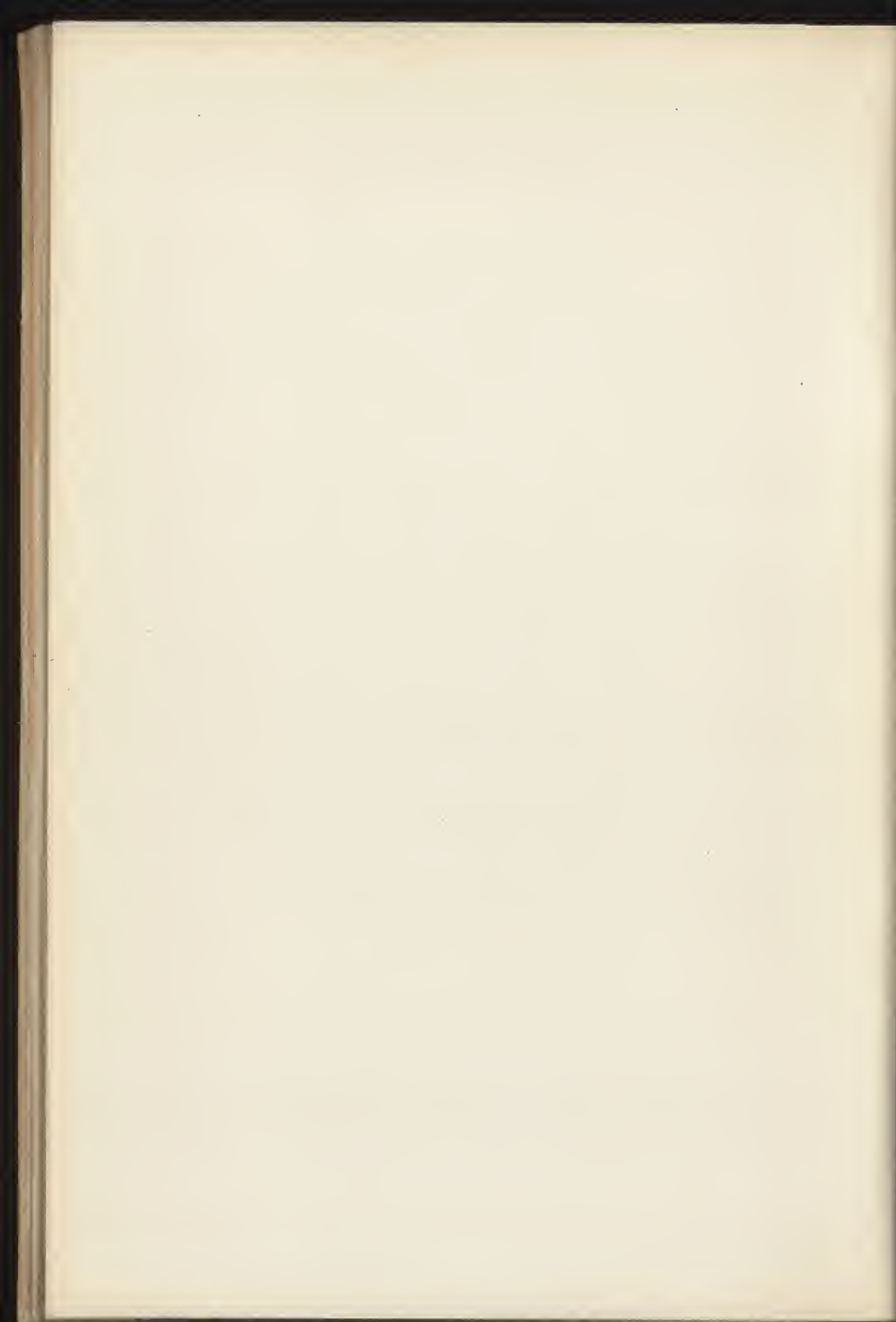
Thus Annibale Caracci, writing from Parma, where, remote from the beaten paths leading to Rome, Florence and Venice, he had suddenly come upon a whole world of beauty, unconquered and, indeed, undreamt of, by the chiefs that were supposed, like Alexander's generals, to have divided among them the empire of art. He saw Correggio and "named a star."

The Renaissance has borne its last flower. Its conquest has been pushed as far as it can possibly go, and henceforth Italy will have no new message for the nations. The poet will be succeeded by the pedant, and from the dust of the creator will spring the critic analysing a hundred pictures to make one sonnet on the grand style. At the same time we feel that Correggio has reached a height at which even he can only maintain himself momentarily, and that one step further will bring a fall. So subtle in their intensity are the elements with which he works his magic that even his cunning is occasionally at fault, when a thin veil of affectation hangs about his perfection of grace, and the ecstasy of his seraphic love evaporates in the excesses of hysteria. And



SKETCH FOR A NATIVITY, POSSIBLY FOR LA NOTTE  
WILTON HOUSE

*Face p. 238*





therein lies the explanation of the fact that not one of the great masters—not even Michelangelo in his decay—has fared so badly as Correggio at the hands of his imitators, and their name is legion. For Michelangelo, working as he did only with naked bodies, setting them to tumble and twist in an ideal atmosphere of their own, makes no demand upon the world of fact; indeed, he seems scarcely to touch it. Those who would know him must go out to meet him in his great gaunt world of strain and struggle, and the few who are bold enough pay dearly. Unnerved by his terrific fascination, his followers become his creatures, incapable of achieving independent artistic manhood.

Much as I admire Strong's lucid grasp and vigorous terseness, I would deprecate his reference to "seraphic love" evaporating in "the excesses of hysteria." I feel that it borders on the same error as Mr. Berenson's reference to Keats and Shelley, and his description of the *St. George* (see page 83), in assuming that the emotion represented has necessarily arisen for the artist out of his own life. This is an error in which Addington Symonds might almost be described as having lived and died. My readers have doubtless perceived that my analysis of Correggio's works implies the belief that this supposition is neither necessary nor probable. An artist may be interested by emotions revealed in others, and enter into them sympathetically in order to grasp some beauty involved in their expression; but as his passion is for that beauty and not for the object that aroused the emotion, to which he lends himself for a time as an actor lends himself to his rôle, he may and even should retain a certain control and alertness which might have been wholly impossible for the person in whom those

emotions were aroused by actual circumstances. To imagine that Correggio often felt the buoyant innocence of his adolescent cherubs, or ever felt like his St. Flavia or his Io, apart from the creative hour which was wholly given to expressing a beauty by the very complicated and delicate processes of oil painting—to imagine this is to do him a singular wrong, such as I have seen done even more ludicrously to Barye, the great French sculptor, by one who imagined that the main motive of his art was vivid sympathy with the joys of a tiger tearing still palpitating flesh, and who indulged his moral abhorrence of the great and good man that Barye was on the ground of this unwarrantable supposition. Keats' swooning arose from a lack of balance between his sentiency and power of expression; he was not artist enough at the time to pass undamaged through so keen an experience; he could not, like Correggio, bear the keen bliss of Io for the sake of beauty, or, like Jesus, bear the sins of the world for the sake of the kingdom of His Father. What is most admirable in Keats is, that he did not content himself with swooning or writing swooning verse, but by passionate endeavour so ennobled his means of expression that he could come to think of the very objects which caused him to feel like swooning with a certain coldness—to feel that he would rather give them sweetmeats than his time. However, it is not in Correggio's earliest works that the nearest approach to a swooning ecstasy is found; we have every reason on the contrary to suppose that for him the freedom to express such emotions was a conquest over a cold or impeded nature. Possibly his might be said to cross the line of Keats' development; only it has travelled in an opposite direction. Michael Angelo gives as a

reason for refusing an invitation to a banquet the fact that he too easily fell in love with beautiful persons, and he shows us that when he fell in love thus he felt he was robbing art. He had thus robbed his art many times, doubtless; but to suppose that his power to express beauty derived strength from such infidelities is to suppose exactly the opposite to what he felt himself. Had he not been subject to such temptations he would never have had by conquering them the power to create; but in so far as he yielded to them he wasted that power. I have said that no doubt the man who painted the *Io* and the *Ganymede* carried within him the potentiality of the most liberal vices, the most generous slips. I have suggested that perhaps he was saved from such "expense of passion in a waste of shame" by some infelicitous impediment in his own nature that confined the man in strict bounds of reserve and timidity, and allowed him fluency only through the channel of his art. He might also have been saved by a grandiose moral effort like Michael Angelo's or by a religious life like that of Fra Angelico. However, to my mind it consorts best with the total effect of his work, and also with the words of Vasari (*see* pp. 233 and 234) to suppose that there was some impediment in his own nature which, while it limited the range of his activity, co-operated benignly with his pious cares and the interests of his art to keep him somewhat tamely within bounds. "The greatest men are not those who err the least." Michael Angelo was certainly a greater man and possibly a greater sinner. These reflections are the last which I have to make on the infelicity of comparing the prodigiously ingenious Correggio with Keats or Shelley, or with the sombre and towering Dante, who has told us

himself how at one period the whole passion of his life was poured into a waste of shame, but who was nevertheless of much less pliant fibre than the painter of the *Zingarella* or the *Io*, and of a quite different import for humanity.

## VI

I shall not here attempt to paint an imaginary Correggio; not because I consider such a task useless or undesirable, but because it does not attract me. Some day I hope that the exquisite effect of his works may shape his image in a more creative brain, so powerfully, so delicately, that when it is expressed it may for ever be acceptable to all those capable of undergoing that effect, and thus become Fame's last portrait of him.

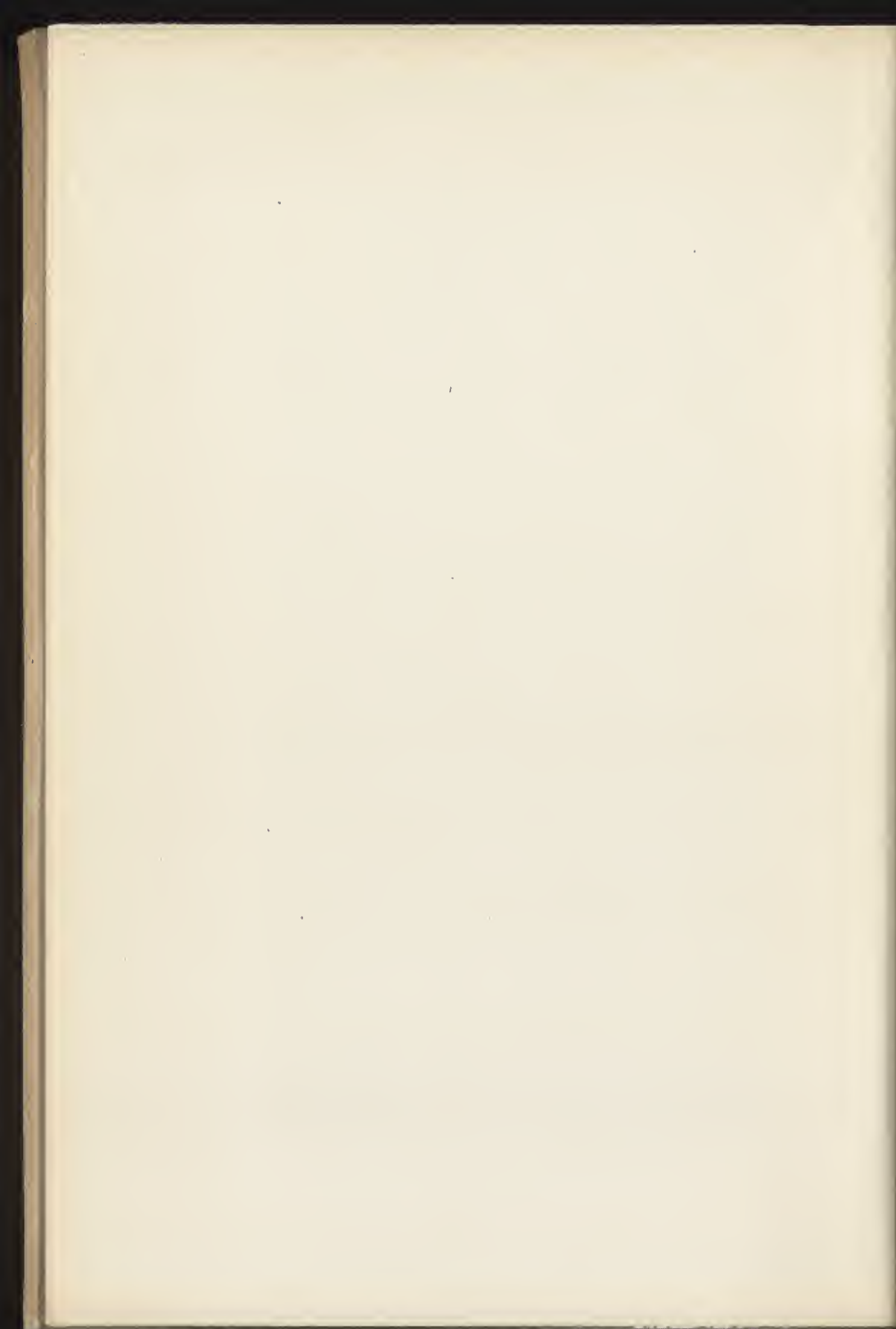
What have I done then? I have ventured, on the basis of general ideas, to question the value of both the methods and the aims of modern historical art criticism; I have sought to indicate the true proportions of Correggio's achievement, both in its relation to other art and within itself; and I have sought to carry this out not for a specialist clique but for the whole public concerned, for all those who, passing Correggio's work in review, would respond to it with any ease—all those who would not be utterly at a loss to conceive the general significance and acceptability of that display. I hope to have appreciated Correggio's works in relation to general ideas; and in order that I may do away with all ambiguity I will next attempt to explain what I mean by "general ideas" and the phrase "in relation to general ideas."



*By permission of Messrs. Colnaghi*

DRAWING FOR THE ANNUNCIATION, WILTON HOUSE

*Face p. 242*



## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL IDEAS.

#### I

I HAD stated in the preface of my book on Dürer that my aim was "an appreciation of the great artist in relation to general ideas." One of my most courteous and sympathetic critics complained that this was "vaguely put"; and I gathered from the perusal of their notices that the more part of them had not grasped what I meant by a general idea. "In relation to general ideas" . . . "That, at least, is what he professes it to be; but we find soon that his true concern is with the nature of art itself, illustrated from Dürer's theories and practice," says another who in other ways gave me the most pleasure of them all; as if he considered that he exposed some lack of conformity between my declared intention and the result I had achieved.

#### II

That the sun rose to-day is a true particular conclusion of which we feel the grounds to have been sufficient; that the sun will rise to-morrow is a particular conclusion not certainly true, but gaining very great support from a widely applicable idea, namely, that the astronomical

operations which produce such effects as the sunrise may be depended on to remain constant yet awhile. We may speculate and conclude that these operations necessarily will in the near or distant future be deranged and terminate, we may also speculate and conclude that they are eternal.

To take another example : men have come to a particular conclusion about the circulation of the blood, which is perfectly satisfying. The theory of evolution is a general idea of very wide application ; that of the struggle for life is one of much more limited application. All three are descriptions of our experience of fact ; the first only is the description of a fact which is fully grasped, nor can we conceive of our desiring to change the main lines of our description of it. The other two we feel are descriptions of processes which in part escape beyond our purview ; they may cover many facts, but large suppositions are necessary to fill those facts out to the projected outline, and these suppositions in the last case are obviously at variance with other known facts.

### III

We may have good or bad grounds for our speculative conclusions, but such conclusions themselves are never sure ; for besides our good or bad grounds for speculation, we can but perceive that there enter into such problems a large number of incalculable elements ; the object that we contemplate has very likely relations to other mighty objects such as we cannot even imagine. In the same way, in history, the little that is known or half-known bears relations to what remains unknown that may be quite



different from anything we surmise. Again ; with human psychology, the little that we know from self-analysis, from observation of those about us, from reflection on the records of the past, bears incalculable relationships both to the origin of mind and to the final result of its development ; and about these we can only speculate. We draw analogies between mind and its development and other objects of contemplation : we say, species develop, reach their maximum of expansion, and then dwindle away, stagnate and die out,—so will it be with human intellect. But the fact that human intellect differs so greatly in kind from every other object of contemplation would give us the pause, were we less passionate, less inconsiderate, less hopeful, or what not. And though we could decide (which we cannot) exactly what is most probable in regard to this question, given the present limit of our information, that probability when determined would never have a sufficient value for reason to lead us to determine our conduct by it ; the disproportion between it and the possible would be too immense. About objects of contemplation, then, that are too vast or too subtle to be seen in their entirety or grasped in their essence by the mind, general ideas are the only ideas available ; and their comparative values must be established by their validity in practice, by the degree and kind of aid they lend us in developing our life.

#### IV

The most obvious part of our knowledge is made up of particular conclusions which experience constantly verifies. There is a great temptation to regard by analogy general ideas of wide applicability as particular conclusions ; for

they also are approved by experience. Such a particular conclusion as that blood circulates might happen to be the secret of an individual and thus become his possession ; but a general idea—though he may fancy it his—when he applies it anew, will prove on familiarity to have been present in a thousand forms and minds before. This is so, because a general idea is a description embracing many facts of common knowledge, which are in everybody's view ; it explains or indicates their mutual relations in some simpler or more attractive way than had before been found. This is why Matthew Arnold can say, "The great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way, and to let humanity decide." *Æsthetic* like literary criticism is really almost wholly a matter of the application of general ideas, ideas which belong to everybody. Such ideas convince not because they are recognised as exactly or absolutely true, but because they are representative of our actual outlook. The use or application of general ideas may be novel and may be a source of power to a single man, and so in a sense be pre-eminently his ; though this does not imply that he knows more, but that his knowledge has taken a form more convenient for use, more suggestive, more inspiring.

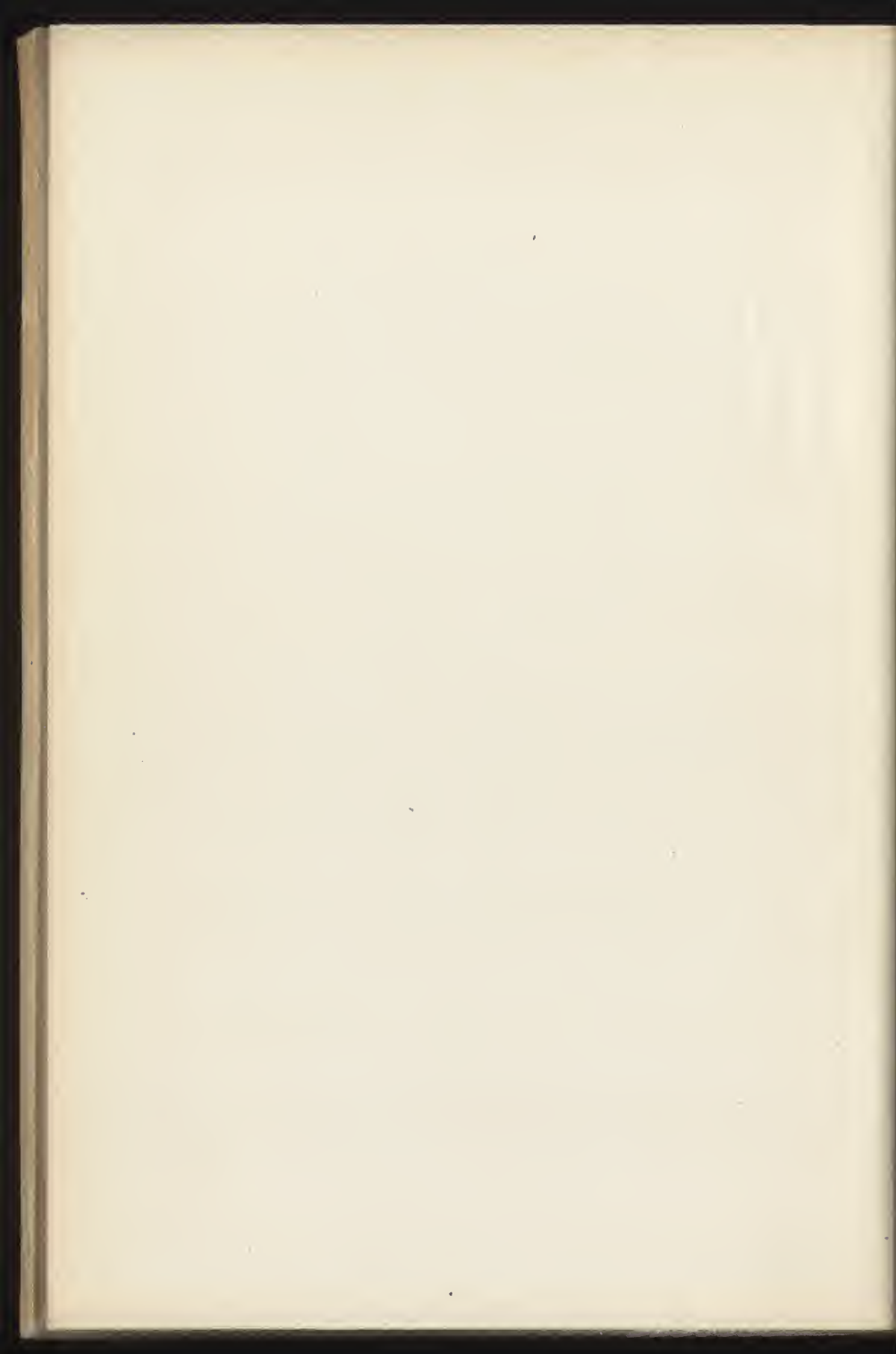
Goethe was very active in suggesting fresh employment for general ideas, which, though present in accepted notions and phrases, had been lost sight of ; and he has very greatly dominated European culture since. Heine, Flaubert, Matthew Arnold, Emerson or Harnack,—whoever it may be, one finds them taking up, some one, some more, of his suggestions as to use for a general idea, and thereby becoming master of a field of thought. A general idea is to be estimated by its serviceableness in description



*Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach*

STUDY FOR ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN IN PARMA CATHEDRAL  
DOME, DRESDEN

*Face p. 216*



of facts ; it is true for us in so far as we feel it to be applicable. Therefore general ideas need to be handled with quick inventiveness ; for we may easily grant that no general idea is certainly or absolutely true ; when rigidly or mechanically dealt with, they either evaporate or condense into absurdity.\*

## V

One of Goethe's illuminating ideas is known to English readers somewhat quaintly as the "Zeitgeist." Mommsen, in his splendid pages of literary criticism on the effect which Euripides produced in Græco-Roman civilisation, has very forcibly applied this idea and given it a better general definition than, I believe, it had before received. He says : "Poetry influences the course of history not in proportion to its absolute value, but in proportion as it is able to forecast the spirit of the age ; and in this respect Euripides is unsurpassed." The "Zeitgeist" worked for Euripides as long as that civilisation maintained itself, and above all in the centuries immediately succeeding the poet's death. Now we to-day may perhaps fancy that the "Zeitgeist" is beginning to work for Euripides again. The tone and temper of the age—the spirit of the times—insidiously moulds men's minds to take a delight in Euripides' sentiments and perceptions, quite out of pro-

\* The attempt to belittle Goethe, on the ground that he treated his mother unworthily, has recently been revived in an English review. "The greatest men are not those who err the least." Those who can appreciate what Goethe did will never be those who insist on what he did not do, in order to lessen the reverence felt for the glory of his name. It is the people who would most benefit by dwelling among Goethe's thoughts, who are ever ready to put forward their crude views of his shortcomings—based, it seems to me, on a complete misconception of his character.

portion to the value which even they set on his work ; they feel mad about him. At least I imagine that Professor Murray and Dr. Verrall feel mad about him ; while certainly a crowd of less distinguished persons feel there is something intoxicating about the way in which they write about him and his works.

Now I have tried to show how the "Zeitgeist" has worked for Correggio ever since his death, making many eminent men feel mad about him, as Annibale Carracci did. Look at the names Parmigianino, Baroccio, Reynolds, Mengs,\* Prudhon, Millet, Baudry, and many others ; they all take, either for a time or for life, a kind of fever, an intoxication and enthusiasm for grace, mobility, amenity, soft and undulating light and shadow, from him ; a whole group of qualities in one particular fusion invades and subdues them with its charm. It is the "Zeitgeist" or spirit of the age which prepares them to receive this in a signal degree, and prepares numbers about them to receive it in some degree.

Beauty is, as Reynolds said, an idea, and Art is the application of the idea of beauty to the design of things made by human toil. Religion is the application of the most serviceable ideas about life to daily practice, in order to shape and control society in its growth. These are two general ideas in relation to which I have tried to view Correggio's work. We know that in these things particular conclusions, whether positive or negative, which claim absolute authority, are delusive, because the fields of art and action pass beyond our limits : human influence has relations with unknown powers.

\* Mengs, as an artist, cannot rank with the other names cited : but as a writer, and as a lover of Correggio, he is truly eminent.

Other general ideas which I have kept in mind are, that all religions are or have been helpful to human life, and that as they crystallise into systems of particular conclusions they come to impede and even war against that fresh application of general ideas in which man's highest life is manifested. The same thing may be said of æsthetic standards and rules of taste. It is a particular conclusion that this or that Church alone is helpful to or alone hinders vital ideas; such a conclusion weans men from humanity to make fanatics of them. In the same way the idea that this or that school of painting is alone admirable, or that this or that master is perfect, weans men from humanity to make them pedants and purists.

The letter kills, the spirit giveth life. Dogmatism is a natural form of genuine eloquence at the outset, but by uninspired repetition it soon becomes a hollow rhetoric that should deceive no discerning person. Alas, in most men of parts we find the genuine and the empty dogmatism mingled together. Besides, men adopt creeds or drop into them as they do affectations and bad habits, and after a time the formula or creed becomes a second nature, and a new courage begins to glow within the cloak that was adopted by cowardice, and new eyes speak through the mask that was once meant to baffle the expression of eyes which feared to reveal.

The texture of reality and the texture of human thought which represents it are both of them of extreme complexity; to deal with them in their fulness demands a superhuman nimbleness, vigour and delicacy. This is why the use of general ideas is so dangerous, and must not be merely intellectual; because with them one is dealing not with certain knowledge or certain ideas, but with

knowledge and ideas floating in divination, surmise, and sentiment. The pure intelligence wants to wipe all this away ; but without these incalculable elements the object is like a sponge, the skeleton of what was once a life ; it no longer affects us in the same way.

The creed of modern art criticism was once the hasty expression of a hungry interest. It has become a bad habit, just as the Church of England's creed is at least for the majority of those who profess it. We are wearied by them with the endless reiteration of unmeaning or doubtful assertions. But we may return to the works of art themselves just as we may return to the saints or to Jesus, for in them is the living application of general ideas. Correggio's work is essentially allied to the idea of beauty ; and inextricably, if fortuitously, to the idea that the saints and Jesus are the light of the world. I have tried to indicate his work's relation to these ideas ; if I have failed I feel that at least I have failed in a generous enterprise, success in which might have been of incalculable beneficence.

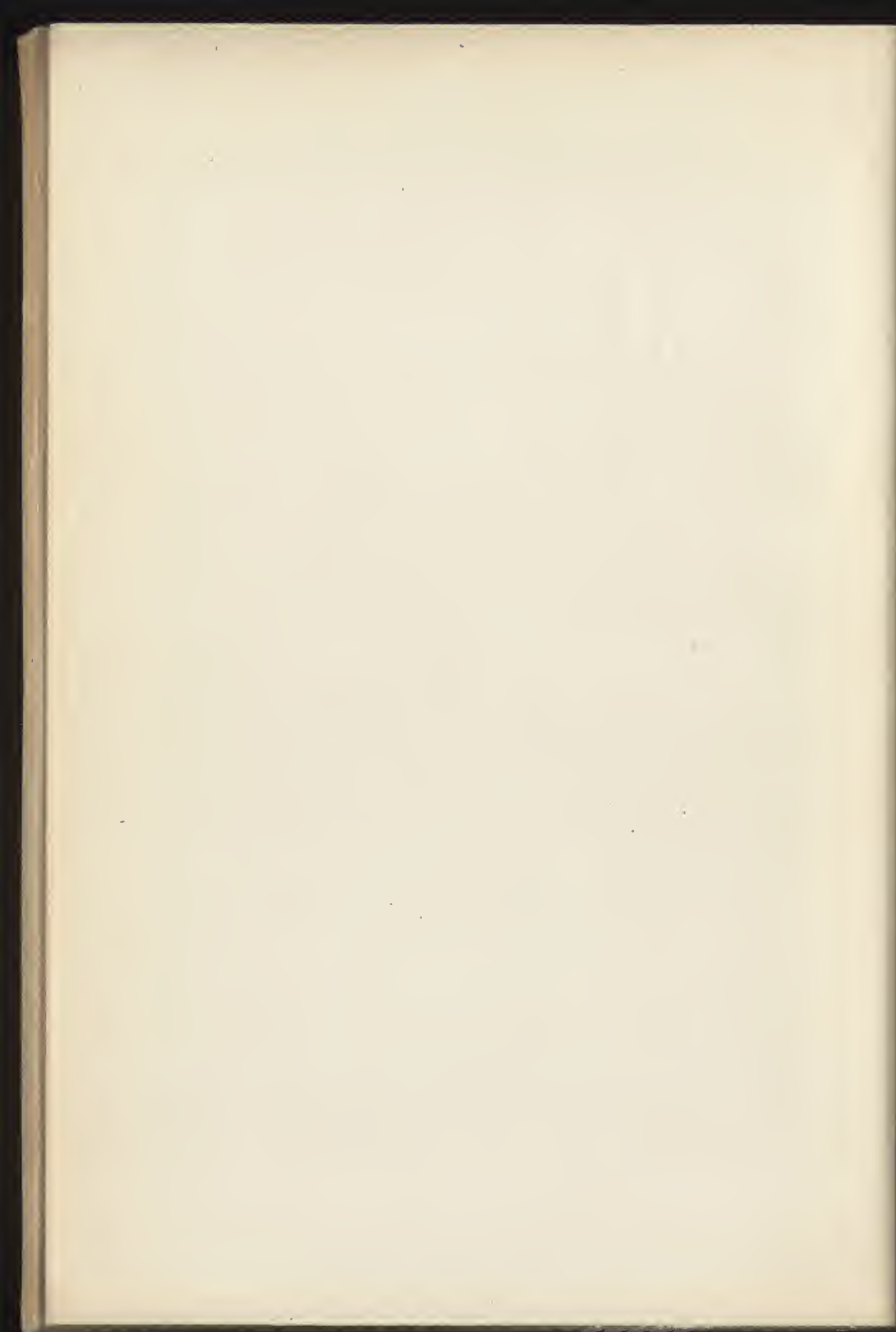




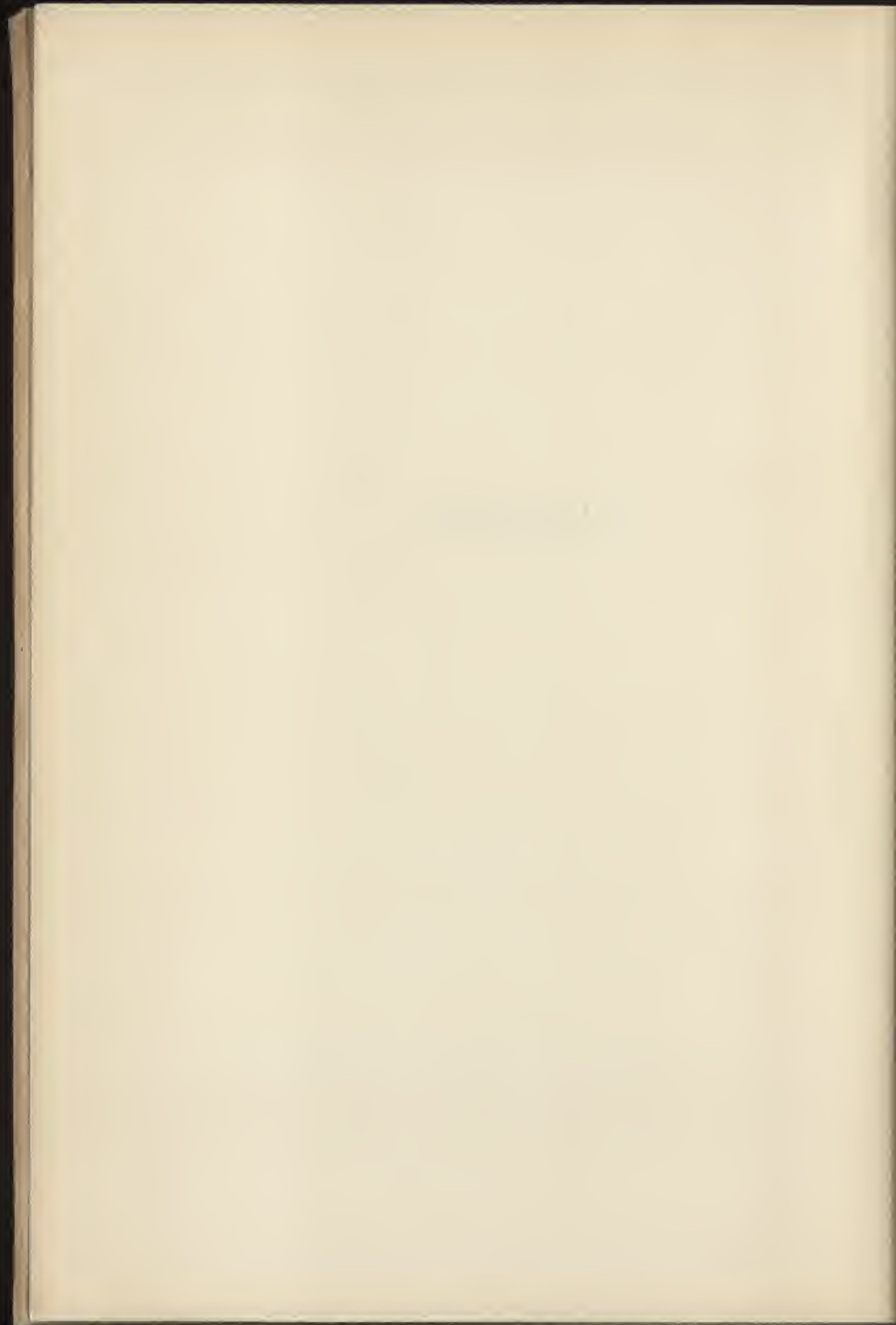
*Braun, Clément & Co., Dornac*

STUDY FOR ANTIOPE (?). WINDSOR

*Face p. 250*



APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

### CHRONOLOGY OF CORREGGIO'S PAINTINGS.

Nothing is more doubtful than the chronological sequence of Correggio's works. If the list that follows differs from those hitherto published, it will be because it has been formed by following the development of the main compositions and the appearance of new pictorial inventions, rather than by considering the individual forms, often obscured by repainting or technical mannerism, which mere over-cleaning can drastically transform. It is probable that many of the pictures painted while the frescoes were in hand were begun and finished at very different dates. This is known to have been the case with *La Notte*. Though a complicated stationing of one object in front of another, wide-angled limbs and startling foreshortening must always indicate a late date, the absence of these characters cannot always be taken to indicate the reverse. Besides, with each new motive we may suppose a return towards simplicity, and in the group through which it runs a fresh development towards ingenuity and complexity; though, of course, the return is never to the same point, and the development from it is carried very various distances, by steps of widely different lengths. The whole journey might sometimes be traversed in the sketches and preparations for a single picture. Many steps are lost, and the pictures that embodied them have vanished, leaving not a trace behind. It is a great good fortune that in the development of the eight pendentives we have the whole story typically illustrated. Artists ail from ill-health and

misfortune, and are untrue to their own natures; they weary and forget themselves; and all these causes of variability are more or less incalculable.

PICTURES PAINTED BEFORE 1515.

1. *Madonna and Child with St. Elizabeth and St. John.*  
Prince Leopold Hohenzollern's Collection at Sigmaringen.
2. *The Marriage of St. Catherine.* Small panel.  
Formerly in the Costabili Gallery at Ferrara. Much damaged. Dr. G. Frizzoni's Collection at Milan.
3. *Madonna, Child and Angels.* Small panel. H., 0·20; w., 0·16.\*  
Once ascribed to Titian. Well preserved.  
No. 1002, Uffizi, Florence.
4. *Adoration of the Magi.* Panel.  
No. 427, Brera, Milan.
5. *Nativity.*  
Formerly in London, under the name of Dosso Dossi.  
Cavaliere Benigno Crespi's Collection, Milan.
6. *Holy Family with St. Elizabeth and St. John.*  
Badly damaged and restored, once in the Malaspina Gallery. Museo Comunale, Pavia.
7. *Madonna, Child and St. John.*  
Transferred from canvas to panel. Once in the Bolognini Collection.  
No. 253, Museo Artistico Municipale, Milan.
8. *Four Saints.* SS. Martha, Mary Magdalen, Peter and Leonard.  
Possibly bought with the estate bequeathed by Melchior Fassi to S. Quirino at Correggio in 1517.  
Lord Ashburton's Collection.

\* Measurements of pictures are given in metres and centimetres except where otherwise stated.

1515 to 1519.

9. *Madonna and St. Francis*. Panel. H., 2.99; w., 2.45½.

August 30, 1514. Correggio's father signed a deed by which his son agreed to produce for 100 gold ducats, half paid down and half on completion, a picture for the high altar of the Franciscans' Church at Correggio.

October 4, 1514. Contract for panel to be delivered within a month.

March 24, 1515. Payment for irons for the frame, and ten ducats to Antonio for a "miara" of gold, to be placed on the altar-piece.

April 4. Last payment entered.

In 1638 it passed to the Entense Collection, in 1746 to Dresden. Signed, Antonius di Alegris P. In good condition.

No. 151, Dresden Gallery.

10. *Christ taking leave of His Mother before the Passion*. Canvas.

H., 33½ inches; w., 29½ inches.

Mentioned by Abbé Bianconi towards the end of the eighteenth century. Passed from Milan to the Parlatore family at Florence, and from the heirs of Professor Parlatore through Mr. Fairfax Murray's agency to Mr. R. H. Benson. Fair condition. Mr. R. H. Benson's Collection, London.

11. *Madonna and Child*.

Known as Campori Madonna. Till 1636 it was in the Castle of Soliera, seven miles from Correggio. Much damaged and badly repainted.

No. 17, Este Gallery, Modena.

12. *Piping Faun or Shepherd*. Panel. H., 0.19; w., 0.16.

From the Electoral Gallery of Munich. Good condition.

No. 1094, Alt Pinakothek, Munich.

13. *Holy Family and St. James*.

Collection of Charles I.

No. 276, Hampton Court Palace.

14. *Madonna, Child and St. John.* Panel. H., 0·48 ; w., 0·37.  
Once in the Farnese Collection.  
No. 135, Prado, Madrid.
15. *La Zingarella.* Madonna, Child and Cherubs.  
Farnese Collection. Condition excellent.  
Naples Gallery.
16. *Rest in Egypt.* Canvas. H., 1·21 ; w., 1·03.  
Painted for the Church of S. Francesco at Correggio, where  
it was till 1638.  
No. 1118, Uffizi, Florence.
17. *Frescoes in the Camera di San Paolo.* Carried out probably  
between April and December 1518.
18. *Madonna, Child, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Lucy.* Picture  
lost.  
Copies at Albinea, in the Capitoline Museum at Rome,  
and in the Brera, No. 420. Painted for the Church of  
Albinea, near Reggio. Receipt for the last payment dated  
October 14, 1519.
19. *Magdalen.* Lost.  
Painted for Guidotto di Roncopo, the priest of Albinea.

1519 to 1526.

20. *Frescoes in S. Giovanni Evangelista.*  
First payment, July 6, 1520. Last payment, January 23,  
1524. Cupola, pendentives and soffits. Tribune in apse.  
Lunette over sacristy door, St. John and Eagle, and  
possibly a compartment of the frieze in the Nave,  
the fourth on the right. Lost fresco of St. Benedict in  
Glory (?).
21. *Christ and the Virgin,* from the Tribune, is preserved on  
a fragment in the Palatine Library at Parma.  
Dr. Mond has two fragments from the Tribune repre-  
senting two angels' heads and one angel's head respectively  
in his collection, Regent's Park, London.



22. *Annunciation*. Fresco from the Church of the Fathers of the Annunciation, Parma. Ruined condition. H., 1·57; w., 3·15.

No. 758, Parma Gallery.

23. *Madonna with Two Children*. Canvas. H., 0·91; w., 0·73. Supposed to be that known as the Cassalmaggiore Madonna by tradition dated 1517. The design, however, indicates a later date.

No. 22A, Staedel Institute, Frankfort-on-Main.

24. *The Marriage of St. Catherine*.

Versions of this exist at Rome, at Naples, at Berlin, and at Alnwick, in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland, all of which claim to be the original and have found supporters.

25. *The Marriage of St. Catherine*. Panel. H., 1·05; w., 1·02.

Vasari mentions that Girolamo da Carpi copied this picture at Modena in the collection of Grillenzoni. It was in Cardinal Barberini's collection; in 1650 he gave it to Cardinal Mazarin.

No. 1117, Louvre, Paris.

26. *Holy Family*. A lost picture, known by old engraving only, possibly that once in the Bianconi collection.

27. *Noli me tangere*. Panel. H., 1·30; w., 1·03.

Mentioned by Vasari as belonging to the Hercolani family of Bologna. Over-cleaned and partly repainted.

No. 132, Prado, Madrid.

28. *Madonna and St. Sebastian*. Panel. H., 2·65; w., 1·61.

Painted for the Confraternità di San Sebastiano at Modena in 1525. Acquired by Duke Alfonso in 1659. Bought for Dresden, 1746.

No. 152, Dresden Gallery.

29. *Deposition*. Canvas. H., 1·82; w., 1·57.

Commissioned for a Chapel in S. Giovanni Evangelista by Placido del Bono, Confessor to Paul III. Totally repainted and ruined.

No. 352, Parma Gallery.

30. *Madonna del Latte*. On canvas. H., 0·68; w., 0·57.  
Another version with a child St. John, instead of a child Angel, is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.  
No. 55, Buda Pesth Gallery.
31. *Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia*. Canvas. H., 1·57; w., 1·82.  
Painted, like the *Deposition*, for Don Placido del Bono, Confessor to Paul III., for the chapel he founded in S. Giovanni Evangelistà. In good condition, though over-cleaned.  
No. 253, Parma Gallery.
32. *Ecce Homo*. Panel. H., 3 feet 2½ inches; w., 2 feet 7½ inches.  
Belonged successively to the Conte Prati of Parma, the Colonna family at Rome, Sir Simon Clarke, Murat, and the Marquis of Londonderry.  
No. 15, National Gallery, London.
33. *Young Man fleeing from the Captors of Christ*. Lost picture.  
There is a copy in the Parma Gallery, No. 524. H., 0·52; w., 0·43. Canvas.
34. *Madonna della Scala*. Fragment of fresco. H., 1·60; w., 1·10. No. 31, Parma Gallery.
35. *Triptych*. Lost.  
Centre, Christ naked seated on a rainbow, surrounded by a glory of angels; sides, St. John the Baptist and St. Bartholomew. Formerly in the Chapel of S. Maria della Misericordia at Correggio. The *Umanità di Cristo* in the Vatican, and probably by Annibale Carracci, is possibly a copy of the centre panel.
36. *Herodias receiving the Head of the Baptist from an Executioner*. A lost picture mentioned by Brunorio and in the inventory of Nicolò Ranieri's lottery.
37. *St. Catherine Reading*. Copy of lost original.  
No. 281, Hampton Court Palace.

1526 to 1530.

38. *Frescoes in Parma Cathedral.*

Commissioned 1523; first payment, November 29, 1526; he seems to have done little work on it after 1530, but his heirs had to refund 140 lire for work left unfinished when he died. He painted the cupola with its pendentives and the soffits of the arches supporting them.

39. *Madonna adoring Child.* Canvas. H., 1·20; w., 0·97.

Passed from the Duke of Mantua to Cosimo III. de Medici. Good condition.

No. 1134, Uffizi, Florence.

40. *Agony in the Garden.* Panel. 15 by 16 inches.

In good condition. In the Duke of Wellington's collection at Apsley House.

There is a copy of this picture—No. 76, National Gallery.

41. *La Notte.* Panel. H., 2·56½; w., 1·88.

Commissioned in 1522 (see page 145), placed in S. Prospero 1530. Stolen thence 1640. In good condition; tampered with about the central light.

No. 154, Dresden Gallery.

42. *Cupid's Reading Lesson.* Canvas. H., 5 feet 1 inch; w., 3 feet.

Bought from the Duke of Mantua by Charles I., at whose sale it was bought by the Duke of Alva. Fell into the hands of Murat, 1808, who took it to Italy, whence it was bought by the Marquis of Londonderry.

No. 10, National Gallery, London.

43. *Il Giorno, or Madonna and St. Jerome.* Panel. H., 2·05; w., 1·41.

Said to have been commissioned in 1523 by Donna Briseide Colla for 400 lire (= £15) for S. Antonio, Parma. Placed in the Cathedral by the Municipality, 1749. Good condition.

No. 351, Parma Gallery.

1530 to 1534.

44. *Ganymede*. Canvas. H., 1·63 ; w., 0·74.

History doubtful. Badly patched here and there, otherwise excellent condition (*see* p. 188).

No. 59, Vienna Gallery.

45. *Io*. Canvas. H., 1·63 ; w., 0·74.

There is a replica at Berlin, No. 216 (H., 1·38 ; w., 0·83), which has been wholly repainted by Prudhon. The original, however, is in excellent condition, only slightly tinkered here or there.

No. 64, Vienna Gallery.

46. *Danaë*. Canvas. H., 1·61 ; w., 1·93.

Vasari says this picture and the *Leda* were given as a present to Charles V. by Frederic Duke of Mantua. It passed through the Orleans and Bridgewater Collections, and in 1823 to the Borghese.

No. 125, Borghese Gallery.

47. *Leda*. Canvas. H., 1·52 ; w., 1·91.

Having been at Stockholm in 1648, it was in the Collection of Philippe d'Orléans, Regent of France, in 1772, whose son, Louis the Pious, cut out the heads of Leda and Io (from the Berlin replica of that picture), and wished even to burn the *Leda*. Coypel saved it, and sought to restore the heads. At his death it was sold to Pasquier, who sold it to Frederick the Great in 1775. The picture has been cleaned, and two new heads put on by Schlesinger.

No. 218, Berlin Gallery.

48. *Madonna della Cesta* (Basket). Panel. H., 1 foot 1½ inches ; w., 10 inches.

After leaving the royal collection at Madrid it passed through many hands, and was brought to England in 1813, and purchased in 1825 for the nation. Excellent condition.

No. 23, National Gallery, London.

49. *Madonna della Scodella*. Panel. H., 2·18; w., 1·37.

For 270 years in S. Sepolchro, Parma. Over-cleaned, especially through the centre, otherwise in good condition. The frame is inscribed with the date, "June 2, 1530."

No. 350, Parma Gallery.

50. *Madonna and St. George*. Panel. H., 2·85; w., 1·90.

Commissioned for the brotherhood of S. Pietro Martire at Modena, and placed in their Church 1530-31; passed to the Ducal Gallery 1648, and thence to Dresden 1746.

No. 155, Dresden Gallery.

51. *Antiope*. Canvas. H., 1·90; w., 1·24.

Bought from Mantua by Charles I., at whose sale it passed to the banker Jabach, and from him to Cardinal Mazarin, on whose death it was bought by Louis XIV.

No. 1118, Louvre, Paris.

52. *Allegory of Virtue*. Canvas. Painted in tempera.

Once in Isabella d'Este's collection, it was bought by Charles I., and thenceforth followed the fortunes of the *Antiope*. Retouched.

Louvre, Paris. Badly placed among the drawings.

53. *Allegory of Vice*. Canvas. Tempera.

History same as foregoing. Retouched.

Louvre, Paris. Badly placed among the drawings.

54. *St. Jerome*. Lost.

Known by old engraving in a volume in the Palatine Library at Parma.

A *St. Jerome*, by Correggio, is included in the inventory of the Duke of Mantua's pictures, 1627, but it is described as a half-length figure with a skull.

55. *St. Joseph*. Lost.

Known by old engraving in the Palatine Library at Parma.

56. *The Magdalen Reading in a Cave*. No. 154, Dresden Gallery (H., 0·29; w., 0·39½), is possibly the copy of a lost picture by Correggio.

In 1528 Correggio had just completed a picture of *The Magdalen Kneeling in a Cave*, the existence of which is only known by a mention in a letter of Veronica Gambara's to Isabella d'Este.

After Correggio's death the Duke of Mantua (in a letter dated September 12, 1534) laid claim to some cartoons of the *Loves of Jupiter* which Correggio was executing for him, and apparently in vain. However, it does not seem perfectly clear that his letter did not refer to the *Antiope*, *Ganymede*, *Danaë*, *Io*, or replicas of them.

#### CHRONOLOGY OF CORREGGIO'S DRAWINGS.

The evidence that produces conviction as to the genuineness of drawings is even less easy to seize than that which convinces in the case of pictures. History helps very little. As a rule, drawings have been less tampered with than pictures, though it is probable that the extent to which they have suffered from the finisher who wished to make them saleable is not yet recognised. Howbeit, drawings produce conviction more easily, perhaps because they are, as a rule, more intimate self-revelations on the part of the artist, and therefore make us feel more certain that we are in contact with him. The capital drawings from this point of view in regard to Correggio are the sheet of pen-sketches in the Albertina (Braun, 290); the Apostle for the Dome (Braun, 298), in the same Collection; the study for the figure of the Virgin in the Dome, at Dresden (Braun, 88); the sketch for *La Notte* (British Museum, 60-6-16-20); the *Antiope* at Windsor (Braun, 132); and the *Annunciation* (at Wilton). From these can be deduced so much of his characteristics as produces the conviction that he was author of those which follow:

##### BEFORE 1515.

1. *Adoration of the Kings*. Red chalk. No. 14, Part II. of the Wilton Drawings.

There are no other drawings to compare with this nor does it closely approximate to any of the early pictures. However, there is nothing positive against the attribution.

## 1518 to 1525.

2. Sketch for children in oval, evidently preparatory for the ovals in the Camera di San Paolo, though the actual figures are not used. No. 24, Part III., Wilton Drawings.

3. An old corpulent man seated on clouds, with a cherub at his feet. Red chalk.  $4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$  inches. British Museum, Payne Knight Collection. Pp. 2. No. 103.

4. Study for the youngest Apostle in the cupola of S. Giovanni Evangelistà. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 444.

5. Herr v. Becherath, of Berlin, also owns a small drawing of the Apostle Paul with angels. Ricci, p. 201.

6. Study for the Virgin in some unknown work. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 457.

7. Study for the Virgin in the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the apse of S. Giovanni Evangelistà. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 445.

8. Study for decoration in Nave of S. Giovanni Evangelistà.  $3\frac{7}{8} \times 6$  inches. British Museum, 1895-9-15-741.

9. Four studies for decorations, probably of the Nave of S. Giovanni Evangelistà. Nos. 35-38. Part IV., Wilton Drawings. Partly in red chalk, partly in black and white body colour.

10. Two small red chalk drawings, back and front. B.M. 1902-6-17-2.

11. Sheet of pen-sketches, containing sketch for figures in *Madonna del Latte*, and showing the influence of Cesare da Sesto. Vienna, Albertina. Braun, No. 290.

12. Study of a child's head. Red chalk. Vienna. Braun, No. 304.

13. Study of a head. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 458.

1526 TO 1530.

14. Study for pendentive of St. John the Baptist, in the Cathedral. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 446.
15. Four leaves of studies in red chalk for single figures, mostly seen from below. Louvre. Braun, Nos. 453, 454, 455, 456.
16. Study of Apostle for the Cathedral dome. Red chalk. Vienna. Braun, No. 298.
17. Study for the Virgin in Cathedral dome. Red chalk. Dresden. Braun, No. 88.
18. Study for Eve in the Cathedral dome. Red chalk. British Museum. 1895-9-15-738. Size  $7\frac{3}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$  inches.
19. Study containing figures of Adam and Abraham, for the Cathedral dome. Red chalk. Windsor. Braun, No. 127. This is not a study, but a combination of several for use in composing.
20. Study of two boys. Bistre.  $3\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  inches. British Museum, 1854-6-28-105.
21. Study for a Christ; on the back, study for Cupid in *Cupid's Reading Lesson*.  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 7$  inches. British Museum, 1862-10-11-200.
22. Study in silver-point and red chalk, for Hermes in *Cupid's Reading Lesson*. Uffizi, Florence.
23. Sketch of composition of Four Saints. Red chalk. Uffizi. Braun, No. 676.
24. Sketch for an *Adoration of the Shepherds*, possibly preparatory for *La Notte*. Red chalk. No. 56, Part VI., Wilton Drawings.
25. Sketch for *La Notte*. Pen and wash. British Museum, 60-6-16-20
26. Large Study of a man's head. Red chalk. British Museum, Braun, No. 125.
27. Sketch for *St. George*. Black and white body colour. Dresden. Braun, No. 85.



28. Study for a boy's head, recognisable in the dome of the Parma Cathedral, in the Collection Sig. Albasini Scrosati. Published by Sig. Gustavo Frizzoni, in *L'Arte, Anno V.*, fasc. 1-11.

1530 to 1534.

29. Sketch for a trophy, heaped up by Cupids and Satyrs out of the spoils and emblems of peace and war. No. 47, Part V., Wilton Drawings.

30. Study, supposed to be for the *Antiope*. Windsor. Braun, No. 132. Red chalk.

#### DRAWINGS LESS CERTAINLY BY CORREGGIO.

1. Marriage of S. Catherine. In the Royal Library of Turin. Early and bad.

2. Two Cupids in a curtain.  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 7$  inches. British Museum, 1901-4-17-29.

3. An Angel. British Museum, 1854-6-28-104.

4. Coronation of St. Catherine. Sketch in pen and chalk. British Museum, Cracherode Collection. Ff. 1. No. 78.

5. A kneeling St. Catherine. Not for any known picture. British Museum, 1854-6-28-103.

6. A kneeling St. Catherine.  $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. British Museum, 1895-9-15-734.

7. A kneeling figure. British Museum, 1854-6-28-101.

8. Madonna and Child. Pen drawing.  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. British Museum, 1854-6-28-99.

9. Two Child Angels. Chatsworth. Braun, No. 137.

10. Two Child Angels. Chatsworth. Braun, No. 142.

11. Two Child Angels. Chatsworth. Braun, No. 138.

12. Two Child Angels. Piancastelli Collection. Published by Sig. Frizzoni, *L'Arte Anno V.*, fasc. 1-11.

13. Study for Child Angel, in *Madonna and St. George*. Braun, No. 87. Dresden Gallery.

14. Study of two Child Angels. Werner-Weisbach Collection, published by G. Frizzoni, in *L'Arte Anno V.*, fasc. 1-11.

15. Sketch of a picture representing a nude female sleeping, surrounded by Angels or Loves. Red chalk. Louvre. Braun, No. 448.

16. Study of the legs of a sleeping woman.  $7\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$  inches. British Museum. Pp. 2; No. 106.

DRAWINGS IN MY OPINION NOT BY CORREGGIO,  
THOUGH ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY  
SIGNOR RICCI.

*Three Apostles on Clouds with Cherubs.* Albertina. Braun, No. 292.

*Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia.* Louvre. Braun, No. 461. Red chalk.

*Madonna and Child.* Red chalk and wash. British Museum, 1860-6-16-22. This last is probably by Baroccio.

The sketch giving the composition the *Madonna della Scala* at Weimar. Braun, 2.

A drawing of two groups in the spaces between the four circular windows of the dome of S. Giovanni Evangelista, representing Child Angels embracing the symbols of the Evangelists St. John, St. Matthew, and St. Luke. B. 450.

NOTE.—There is among the Chatsworth Drawings attributed to Correggio a magnificent drawing after the ascending Virgin in the dome of Parma Cathedral, by Rubens. Braun, No. 136.

PRINCIPAL DATES CONCERNING CORREGGIO'S  
PARENTS AND ORIGIN.

1329. The name Allegri occurs as early as 1329, borne by a native of Castellazzo, a village of Campagnola, destroyed in 1371, when its inhabitants fled to Correggio.

1440. One Giacomo Allegri is the first person from whom the artist can be asserted to be directly derived.

1446. The house in which Correggio was born was bought by Jacopo Allegri in May 1446, and is still standing.

1479. Cristoforo, son of the above Giacomo, went to live in the State of Bologna with his wife and children in June 1479, described as tiller of the soil (p. 35).

1485. Date of the will of Correggio's grandfather.

Pellegrino Allegri, Correggio's father, was a victualler and petty manufacturer, and made many small purchases of lands, and also rented several others from their owners; in 1534 he owned some 120 Reggian acres scattered over the Commune of Fabrico and districts of Mandrio, Mandriolo, Fordondo, S. Prospero, S. Biagio, and S. Martino, and left, among other bequests, by the will he made in 1538, a dowry of 240 gold scudi to Correggio's daughter, then fourteen years of age. Bernardina Piazzola (of the Aromani family), Correggio's mother, had brought him 100 lire as her dowry.

1527. Lorenzo Correggio, painter's uncle, died in December.

#### PRINCIPAL DATES BEARING ON CORREGGIO'S LIFE.

1494. Birth of Correggio. Vasari states that Correggio died in 1534, at the age of about forty. (*See Ricci*, p. 29.) He became of age between August 30, 1514, and July 14, 1517. Proofs: A deed in which Correggio engaged as a minor to paint the picture now in the Dresden Gallery, for the Convent of San Francesco, "cum consensu ejus patris præsentis," August 30, 1514. On July 14, 1517, he witnessed the reading of Giovanna da Montecorvino's will, and was therefore no longer a minor.

1503. Girolama Merlini, Correggio's wife, born.

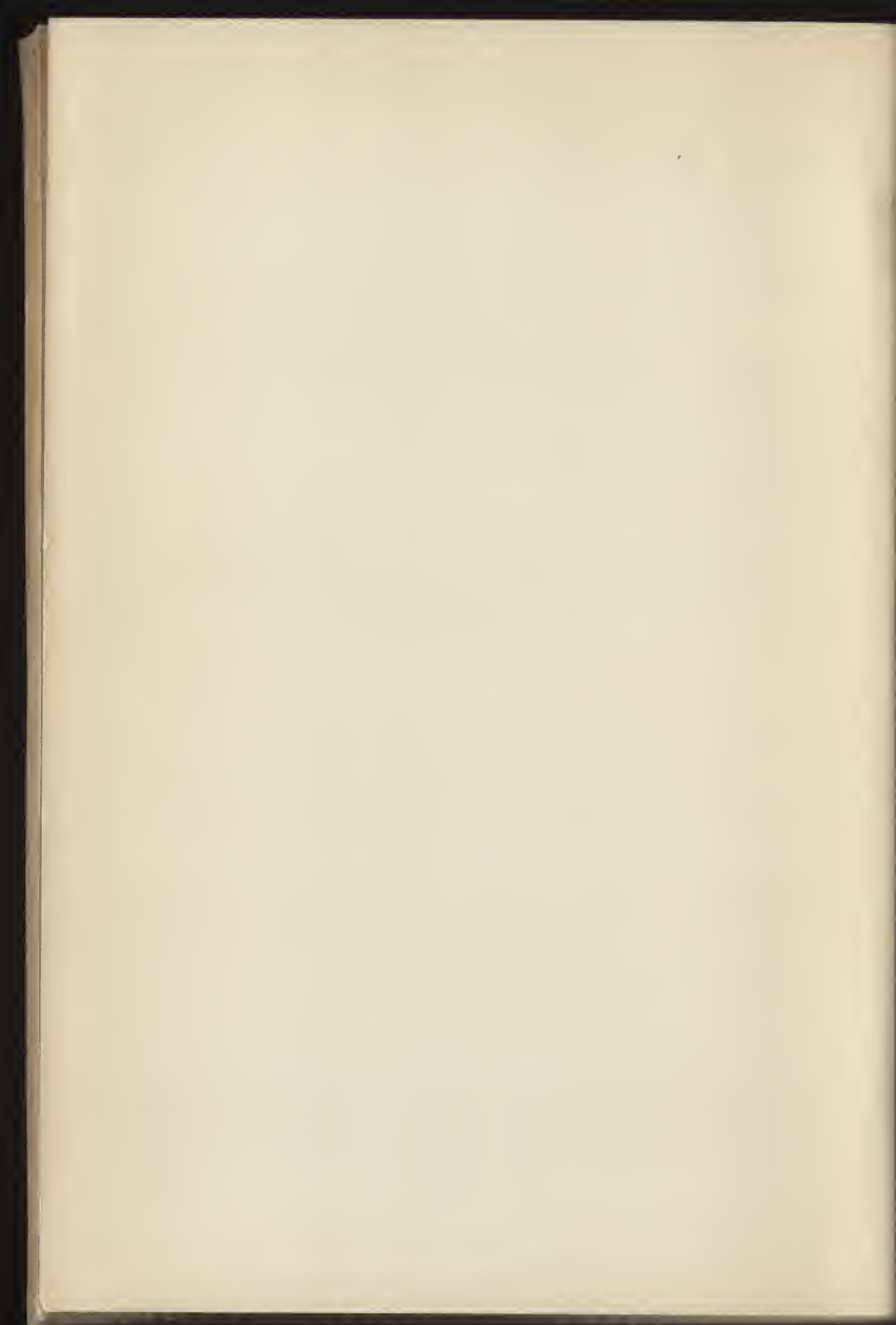
1511. January 12. Correggio stood sponsor for a little Antonio of the Vigarini family.
1511. The Village of Correggio decimated by the plague.
- 1511 to 1513. Visit to Mantua (?). No mention at Correggio during this period. Costa and Dosso were both present at Mantua.
1513. Plague in Mantua.
1514. Correggio signed a deed engaging to paint the picture of the *Madonna and St. Francis*, now in the Dresden Gallery, for the Convent of San Francesco.
1515. Supposed visit to Bologna in the company of Veronica Gambara, to be present at the meeting of Francis I. and Leo X. Correggio is supposed to have exclaimed: "I too am a painter!" on this occasion, when standing before Raphael's *St. Cecilia*.
1516. October 4. He stood godfather to Anastasia Elisabetta Toraglielo.
1517. July 14. He witnessed the reading of Giovanna da Montecorvino's will.
1518. March 17. He stood godfather to Rosa Bertoni.
1518. June. Girolama Merlini, afterwards his wife, made a will in favour of her uncle and aunt Giovanni and Lucia Merlini.
1519. January 18. Correggio acted as witness to a deed of settlement conveying a dowry to his maternal uncle, Francesco Aromani.
1519. October 14. Receipt for all charges in connection with his altar-piece at Albinea.
1520. Correggio married.
1520. July 6. First payment recorded in the monastery account books for work in S. Giovanni Evangelistà, thirty gold ducats for painting the cupola. The monks had agreed to give him by instalments a sum amounting to one hundred and thirty. The tribune of the apse, sixty-five ducats; frieze and cornices, gilding, five

ducats; to ornament the pillars supporting cupola and the candelabra beneath, six ducats; the body of the church, sixty-five ducats. This last agreed to in 1522.

1521. Audience with Manfredo in the palace in connection with a deed of gift, by which Correggio's maternal uncle, Francesco Aromani, made over to him all his effects.
1521. April. Received six ducats and a colt worth eight ducats, as payment for S. Giovanni frescoes.
1521. May. Diploma of affiliation to the brotherhood of S. Giovanni Evangelistà, as a lay member, conferred on Correggio.
1521. July 26. Correggio received the dowry of two hundred and fifty-one ducats assigned to Girolama, his wife.
1521. September 3. Correggio's eldest son, Pomponio, born. Birth certificate entry extant in the Baptistery Registry, Parma.
1521. September 18. He released Francesco degli Affarosi from his duties as proxy for him in the action he had brought against Romanello degli Aromani, who disputed his succession to his maternal uncle's property.
1521. December 10. He obtained favourable sentence in his suit over his uncle's property.
1522. Payments for San Giovanni Evangelistà April 18 and May 19, May 28 and July 28.
1522. October 14. Commission for *La Notte* at Reggio.
1523. Payments for S. Giovanni Evangelistà January 20, March 13, June 8.
1524. Ditto, January 4, twenty-five ducats; January 23, the concluding twenty-seven ducats. Correggio's receipt.
1524. December 6. Francesca Letizia, Correggio's eldest daughter, born. Became wife to Pompeo Brunorio, and lived to a fairly advanced age.

1526. September 24. Caterina Lucrezia, second daughter, born.
1527. October 3. Anna Geria, Correggio's third daughter, born. The priest wrote the mother's name down as Jacobina, and Mengs and others have supposed a second wife.
1528. March 20. Deed empowering Pellegrino Allegri to administer the goods of his son and daughter-in-law during their absence. Girolama is mentioned by name in it.
1528. September 3. Veronica Gambara, in a letter to Isabella d'Este, speaks of Correggio's *Magdalen* (now lost) as just completed.
1529. April. A small house adjoining that in which the artist was born was bought.
1530. November 17. Second quarter of the whole amount for Cathedral frescoes (two hundred and seventy-five ducats) paid to Correggio.
1530. Correggio returned from Parma to Correggio with his four children.
1532. Correggio witnessed the drawing up of the act whereby Manfredo appointed Paolo Brunorio his proxy, and empowered him to receive reinvestiture, on his behalf, for all feofs held by the lords of Correggio under Charles V.
1534. January 24. Witnessed a settlement of 20,000 gold scudi on Chiara, daughter of Gianfrancesco, of Correggio, on the occasion of her betrothal to Ippolito, son of Giberto and Veronica Gambara.
1534. Thursday, March 5. Correggio died in the house where he signed the Francesco deed. On the following day Mass was said for the repose of his soul.
1534. March 6. Correggio's funeral.
1534. March 9. A Mass said for his soul.
1534. March 10. Ditto.

1534. June 15. Correggio's father refunded twenty-five gold scudi paid him by Messer Alberto Pancioli of Reggio on account, for the altar-piece he did not live to paint.
1534. Alessandro Caccia, Governor of Parma, wrote to the Duke of Mantua five months after Correggio's death: "I hear he has made comfortable provision for his heirs."
1535. March 8. A Mass was said for Correggio's soul.
1535. March 9. Ditto.
1542. March 1. Pellegrino, Allegri Correggio's father, died.
1545. Bernardina Piazzola, Correggio's mother, died.
1550. The house was sold out of the family to Gherardino Paris.
1641. Correggio's tomb was destroyed, and his remains and tablet removed to the lateral porch of San Francesco.
1786. An old woman's skull was found in the cloister near the tablet, proclaimed to be Correggio's, and sent to Modena.





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